



The different world magic is too behind!

遅れる

異世界魔法は



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OVERLAP

Isekai Mahou wa Okureteru!(LN)

The Different World Magic Is Too Behind!

Volume 1

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Illustration

異世界魔法は遅れてる! 1



樋辻臥命

Illustration : himesuz



ただ、しゅわのな...
Pachinko

ふひやあに？
ななな何をするに？
Pachinko



やれやれ、人のあとを尾け回したり、
嗅ぎ回ったりするのは、
いい趣味とは思えないけどな？
そういうことをしているのは――

……まさか、気付いていたのか？



そうめいさん
——
蒼銘斬！！

蒼み渡る青光に与うるは麒麟に変わる天つ雲。

The ruler of red reaches

水天界龍。その境界は今この時のお我が手の中に。

Aqua dominion is hand

切り開け蒼天。その名は目録に書き青世

Answer the blue of blue

Prologue - Magician: Yakagi Suimei

Felmenia Stingray was one of the Court Mages of the Astel Kingdom. Born as the second daughter of Earl Stingray, she was a girl of noble lineage who was brought up without any inconveniences since childhood. After discovering her high mana capacity as a child, she studied under an old mage who was called the Sage. She was considered a genius who peered into the abyss of magic. She studied the mysteries of magic under the Sage for ten years. Under his tutelage, Felmenia had reached the depths of magic that was said to normally take 30 years at a minimum. "From this point on, there is nothing more I can teach you. Using your own wits, discover your own magic." Being told this by her teacher, Felmenia's life of studying under the Sage had changed and become very busy.

With her magic research as a basis, she was appointed as the youngest initiate of the Court Mages. With this both the number of jobs entrusted to her and the number of invitations to evening parties had increased exponentially. Without getting much of a chance to sleep she was experiencing everything from unfamiliar jobs, to tea parties with nobles ladies, to escapes from magic labyrinths. It was a fulfilling life that made her forget all the hardships she had to endure. From all this, she already had a great sense of accomplishment. It made her feel alive. She wasn't a noble princess trapped in a bird cage. She felt that she was now a vital cog of her country.

Several years after separating from her teacher, Felmenia came across a grand discovery. In the middle of the subjugation of monsters and demons as part of her job as a court mage, she had discovered the truth of the flame that nobody had come across before. At the tender age of fifteen Felmenia had finally attained the truth. The truth of the flame. She had discovered the white flame which burned anything and everything. Trembling with joy, Felmenia quickly reported her discovery to her teacher and the King. The two had showered her in words of praise for this grand achievement. This was the moment where she found true value in her own life. This is what she wished for, what she had been chasing all this time. The gratitude of the people, the jealousy of her colleagues and the grand expectation placed on her by her

parents were all unprecedented honours to her. Felmenia had become regarded as one of the greatest mages within the whole kingdom... however, Felmenia – who sought the title of the absolute strongest mage in all the kingdom – could not lift a single finger before the boy who stood in front of her.

The full moon loomed over a dark, starry sky of the courtyard of Camellia Castle, the seat of the King of Astel. The boy before her opened his mouth as if to pass down judgment.

“... My goodness... It isn't in good taste to stalk someone you know? The only ones who are allowed to do that are the pitiful and foolish stray sheep who understand nothing of the world.”

This boy standing before her speaking in unfamiliar terms was one of the friends summoned together with the hero Reiji. Unlike the girl who had decided to join the hero in defeating the Demon Lord, this boy had refused to participate before the King and his court and requested to be sent back to his own world.

An extremely normal young boy. Hiding his wisdom with a plain face, he had claimed to just be a normal human. He emphasized the fact that he held no power. Therefore there was no way he could face monsters, demons or devils.

Let alone facing the Demon Lord. “I will not fight. Send me back. Don't get me involved.” This had happened only a few days ago. Since then he had shut himself up in the room granted to him. “Even among all the confusion and fear of being suddenly summoned, the girl summoned alongside the hero would fight, yet he stubbornly demands to be sent back.” “Such disgraceful behaviour.” “Can he even call himself a man?” “Such selfishness.” “He's the worst.” Such words were being thrown around behind his back by the prime minister, general and soldiers of the castle.

But how was it in reality? The white flame was Felmenia's greatest pride. The absolute perfection of fire magic. However the boy before her had completely erased her flame as if it was worthless with a single snap of his fingers. He was standing still in a storm of magic and pressure that could chill one's bones.

“... Well then, little miss mage, is it my turn yet?”

Felmenia Stingray had discovered just how shallow her understanding of this boy was at this point. It is very likely that this boy was both terribly smart

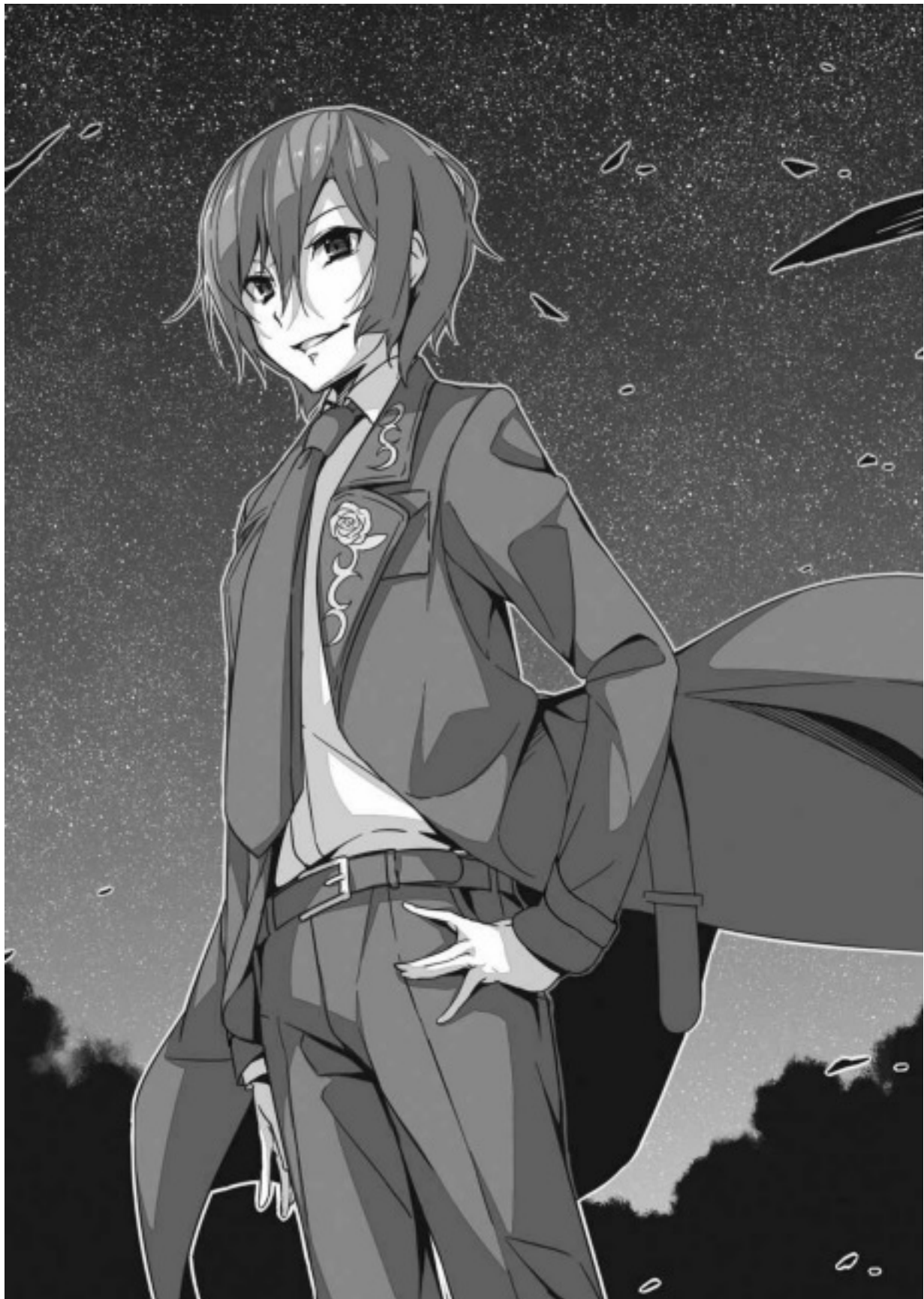
and strong. His bland appearance had all been a big facade. All those who had called him a pitiable fool who had just been dragged into everything were in fact the fools themselves. This boy was a cunning fox who played the fool on purpose. His power was such that one would be dazzled by simply speaking of it. This monster had reached much further into the depths of magic than she ever had even after studying under the Sage. He held magic that she could not possibly compete with. The summoned hero had received divine protection, but even so she felt that this monster could defeat the hero easily. Without a doubt, he was a mage who had reached the highest peaks of magic.

“... Just what kind of person are you?” Felmenia asked with a shaky voice.

The boy started playing with something in his hand with a bored expression and replied.

“I am a magician, Yakagi Suimei.”

For the first time, he had named himself with pride.



Chapter 1 - I'm not something you just summon!

“Ow....”

It had happened so suddenly that there was no chance to prepare. The price for not being ready was the pain in his butt. Suimei could only leak out his anguish with a painful complaint. He had been caught completely off guard.

Even though he had a premonition that something would happen beforehand, it was all too sudden for him to take a proper landing posture. The floor was hard.

It was most likely a stone pavement or tiling. He had just fallen right on his butt and his tailbone was screaming in pain. What had just happened? There was no need to think back on it, this was clearly an incident. On the way back from school alongside his two friends, a magic circle for teleportation had suddenly appeared on the roadside and sucked them in forcefully.

After being teleported he was dropped on his butt. This was definitely a bonus to being suddenly teleported he could do without. Suimei thought to himself.

(... This is definitely a terrible blunder...)

Within the concrete jungle of the modern world, Suimei has been walking down the path of magic confidently. He had been walking down this path for a mere 12 years, but he still held pride that he was pretty skilled. Yet such a skilled modern magician had been caught in someone else's magic so easily. He was able to sense it, to see it right in front of his own eyes, but was unable to respond to it appropriately and was just standing idly by for that one second it took to capture him. Such a mistake could only be seen as a terrible blunder.

Suimei could only admit his disappointment with himself. Tears were forming at the corner of his eyes from the damage to both his pride and butt. Suimei began to look around to see what had happened to his friends who had been walking beside him.

“Ow...”

Right next to Suimei was his friend Shana Reiji, who was patting his butt after suffering the same damage that Suimei had received from the fall. Reiji had dyed brown hair kept neatly on top of his face which didn't have a single wrinkle or crease. It was a face that could only be described as handsome, the type that would make women weak at the knees.

“Oi, Reiji, are you alright?”

“Aah... Somehow. How about Suimei?”

“My butt hurts. A lot. I think it's split in two...”

“Hahaha, you too Suimei? By any chance is it only you here?”

Reiji laughed cheerfully, but only for a moment as he turned the topic onto a more serious note. There was another friend walking alongside them at the time they were caught up in this incident. He had noticed that Anou Mizuki was not with them currently and inquired about her in a hurry. Suimei took a brief look around and was also unable to spot her. The girl who had just been walking alongside them was nowhere to be found. They were in a cylindrical room enclosed by stone walls illuminated by old-fashioned candlesticks. What they could spot in the room was a large, sturdy door and a crest drawn on the ground below their feet – a magic teleportation circle.

“A... Ah... Mizuki isn't here...”

Towards his anxious friend, Suimei responded in a small murmur. Reiji could only react with a confused and bitter look on his face as he inquired further.

“What happened? And where is this?”

“Aah. I also don't know where this is. However, it seems that by somebody's will we have been brought to this weird place... That much I do understand.”

“... Is this by any chance...?”

Matching Reiji's gaze, Suimei also looked down at the floor where the large magic circle was drawn. Within the large circle another circle about a quarter of its size was drawn at its edge. Many geometric patterns and shapes formed a pentagram within the circles. Along the rims was magic written in a language that Suimei had never seen before. He could recognize that the circle shared principles with necromancy and summoning magic, but he was the only one who could between the two. Of course there was no way that the completely normal

Reiji would know such things. Suimei and Reiji knew each other since middle school. However the fact was that the mystery known as magic existed in their world and the fact that he himself was a magician were both secrets Suimei kept from Reiji. Therefore the only way to establish what was happening and what was below their feet was to use information that was known to the subculture of anime and manga.

“That's probably it.”

“Uwa...”

To Suimei's calm acknowledgement of the situation, Reiji made a tired face.

“... Hey, Suimei. Doesn't this sudden situation seem awfully familiar?”

“Yeah. The light novel Mizuki lent us the other day was definitely the same.”

“That's right. Suddenly called to another world and asked to defeat the Demon Lord. This situation seems identical to that story.”

“I can't laugh at that. I seriously can't laugh at that joke”

Suimei responded while making a face like his stomach was in pain and Reiji could only react with a dry laugh and a complicated expression.

“Ha, haha... But, even though I think it is impossible... for some reason I feel like it's right on the mark.”

“Reiji... are you seriously saying that?”

“Yeah.”

“Oi oi, what do you mean yeah...”

Amazed at Reiji's simple nod and deduction, Suimei looked away and began his plan to discreetly analyze the area with magic without letting Reiji catch on. This situation which mirrored the novel was far too fantastical and he wasn't fully convinced it was the case. If this truly was not Earth then something in their surrounding should point to that fact. Suimei began to gather his magic to analyze their surroundings. Gravity was normal and there was no major difference to the composition of the air. The differences were small enough that they could simply be somewhere else on Earth. However...

(There's a deep concentration of mana here... Is it an effect of the room?)

Mana, sometimes referred to as Ether, was the mysterious source of power

that could be found in the atmosphere. In this place it was particularly rich.

This sort of richness was something that could be found right above a soul vein, at the core of the planet or on top of a magic ritual site at a holy temple. This alone was not enough to deem this as a different world, it was still too far out there. It could simply be that they required a location rich in mana to activate this magic circle. This was a very likely conclusion. Reiji had no way of sensing mana, so there's no way he could possibly notice this slight irregularity. His sense that this may be another world must have come from something else.

“Reiji, why do you think that's the case?”

“Just somehow, I feel like I've become really strong.”

“Wha...? Is, is it that? Did your brain melt, Reiji-san?”

“No, it's not like I'm going crazy. Here...”

While saying that, at a spot outside of the magic circle, Reiji lightly struck the floor. The stone floor broke and crumbled to dust with a violent sound.

“Tha-that kind of idiotic...”

Suimei looked on with astonished eyes. No matter how much Reiji was a good-at-all-sport-idol-like-hunk, this just wasn't right. It was impossible. It took a tremendous amount of force to cause stone to shatter the way it just did. It was absolutely impossible to do with a light tap of the fist. Even if Reiji was endowed with his ultra hunk powers, this was definitely out of the question. However, the friend before his eyes had just done so with a calm expression.

“See?”

“See? My ass! Don't move the plot forward in such an ominous direction...”

It was certainly ominous. If this really was a summoning to another world... This was certainly outside Suimei's realm of understanding. He could not help but admire the technique which could instantly transport people from across worlds and grant permanent physical reinforcement... It was only natural to him as a magician to admire such a magic after all.

“And how about Suimei?”

“... No, nothing seems different for me.”

Suimei tried clenching his fist and gathering magic power, but he didn't

sense any increase in his abilities. In short, Reiji was the only one who was summoned as a hero to defeat the Demon Lord. There was no point in summoning Suimei here. While Suimei dropped his shoulders, suddenly the magic circle beneath their feet began to shine. Reiji's expression suddenly shifted to one of uneasiness.

“This is...”

“... It's activating...! Are we being transferred again or...?”

“Something is being summoned!?”

Reiji understood quickly. He had hit the mark with that answer and put himself on guard. A smaller magic circle than the formation on the ground suddenly appeared in the air.

“It's coming!”

“Ah...!”

A voice came from the circle and Reiji suddenly moved as a shadow emerged. He seemed to have recognized what was coming out. Reiji showed a level of agility far beyond what he was previously capable of. Was this because of the physical reinforcement? Reiji had managed to catch Anou Mizuki who had fallen from above in an instant.

“Mizuki!”

“Fueh....? Reiji-kun, why...?”

“Good for you Mizuki. Thanks to Reiji your butt was saved.”

Thus, the three friends were reunited again in this unknown place.



“Really? Are you serious...?”

“Yeah, it does seem like it.”

After catching Mizuki, Reiji began to explain his deduction at what their current predicament was. Mizuki was quite confused about the entire situation but she was at least glad that she was not alone. Thanks to the encouragement of her two friends, she gradually came to accept the current situation. It could at least be said that she had enough nerves to not escape from reality.

“...Un, I got it.”

“You accepted it pretty fast, huh?”

“Well the two of you are awfully calm about it. If I'm the only one who gets flustered about it then it would be embarrassing. Anyways since it has actually happened, the only choice is to accept it.”

Mizuki responded bluntly while fiddling with the unseasonable red muffler around her neck. She returned a gentle gaze from her pitch black eyes behind her long black hair. She had the look of a very ephemeral and fragile young woman. Although she looked rather meek, she had a surprisingly unperturbed, stout heart on the inside. Similar to Reiji, she only knew a normal everyday life, so to this point this wasn't something that they had witnessed before. Reiji returned a smile towards the brave Mizuki.

“You're strong, Mizuki.”

“Eh? Is... is that so?”

Mizuki smiled at Reiji's complement and fell silent, turning bright red in the face. This kind of exchange between the two was the same as usual. Also as usual it seemed Reiji was completely oblivious to any of it. And just like that, the tension in the air from the completely incomprehensible situation was blown away. At this point, Suimei turned to Mizuki.

“So, Mizuki. I want to ask you something.”

“What's the matter?”

“Ummm, is it that?”

“The situation that we've found ourselves in is pretty identical to that light novel right? So after this...”

“Ye-yeah. Someone important from this world's country will appear. Or possibly...”

What could it be? The first part of her reply was definitely the same as the contents of the novel. So what other possibility was she thinking of? Was there some other development that this situation could progress towards? Reiji pushed Mizuki for an explanation.

“Is there another possibility?”

“In another novel, the location they were summoned to was... In other words the place we are in right now... Would be the Demon Lord's castle.”

“Starting right at the climax?”

“Right, the last dungeon.”

“Uwa... No matter how you look at it that difficulty setting is too high.”

Suimei gave out a disheartened reply. Normally in this kind of the story, after being summoned, the protagonists go on a grand adventure and after many twists and turns finally arrive before the Demon Lord for a final confrontation.

However from what Mizuki just said, this current situation could be that final climax itself. This was a very unpleasant possibility. It was far too dangerous.

Reiji asked Mizuki for further clarification in a calm tone.

“If I remember right that's the kind of story where right after being summoned, they defeat the Demon Lord right away, return triumphantly to the country from another world and are celebrated as heroes?”

“Yeah, and then they challenge the next even more powerful enemy. Or they get involved in a civil war within the country.”

“That's right. But this situation that we're in right now...”

“Like Reiji-kun said, anything that happens from now on wouldn't be particularly strange.”

“Uee...”

This wore them out quite a bit. It was the type of feeling that just made them want to groan. No matter how things turned out, it was a certainty they were about to get involved in something troublesome. Mizuki suddenly spoke up to clear the mood.

“Well, whatever happens happens.”

Suimei had used magic to enhance his hearing. He had started hearing sounds from beyond the door. Killing off his presence, negligence and any extra noise he could make, Suimei called out to the others.

“Hey.”

“Eh?”

“Ah. I know”

“Oh? Is that also a result of your strengthening?”

“I think so. If so how is Suimei able to hear it?”

“My ears have always been good... but this isn't the time for that conversation.”

Suimei brushed off the question with a light joke. Suimei had come to an understanding of the current situation with Reiji, however Mizuki who was completely normal had no idea what was going on.

“Eh? Eh?”

“Mizuki. Right now, there are people drawing nearer to us. Quite a few of them too.”

Reiji could recognize the distinct sound of many footsteps approaching. It seemed that the strengthening effect wasn't just for show. Having given Mizuki a simple explanation, Reiji positioned himself in front of Mizuki with the intention of protecting her while focusing on the passage that lied beyond the doors. Mizuki huddled into a worried pose behind Reiji. Suimei also readied himself at Reiji's side.

“Now then, just what is going to pop out...?”

“It would be nice if it was the important people from another world instead of some dangerous group.”

“Stupid Reiji. The best scenario would be our classmates popping out saying they tricked us.”

“...”

Reiji did not respond to Suimei's frivolous joke that didn't take the seriousness of the situation into account. The footsteps were gradually approaching the door to the room. They had no idea what their intentions were, but the footsteps were definitely approaching with the intent of entering this room. Hopefully it was the important people from the other world. Reiji lowered his stance so that he could spring into action at any time. Mizuki stepped back as to not get in his way. Suimei had also prepared himself, however his heart was excited at just what mystery was going to come through those doors. This was definitely his curiosity as a magician. While thinking of such things, Suimei inspected his belongings. He had been summoned without being able to make any sort of preparations. He only had what he normally carried around.

(As for my belongings I have my handbag with a chain accessory, a vial of mercury, cards, a suit, gloves of discord and a little of Yakagi's secret medicine... Frankly speaking I'm quite anxious to bring any of it out. However...)

If anything happened, Suimei would have to take action. Both Reiji and Mizuki had lived normal Japanese lives up to this point. Suimei who was part of the underworld society was probably the only one with any live combat experience. He would prefer to keep the both of them in the dark about his identity as a magician, but he would not do so at the expense of their lives. He would be somewhat remorseful, but in the worst case he had the option of erasing their memories.

The three of them had gotten stiff with tension. The footsteps had arrived at the door. This brief moment of silence seemed to stretch out forever. Finally, the door started to creak open slowly making a loud noise as it seemed to drag along the floor. Reiji put himself on guard at the sudden movement.

“— !”

“Firmus...” (My Robustness)

In this tense atmosphere, Suimei discreetly let out a quiet chant and prepared defensive magic. It wasn't impossible that they would just be suddenly attacked as the door opened. It was definitely better to be prepared for the worst.

As the door finally opened, what appeared was a group of soldiers clad in armour who gave off a calm and professional impression. From what they could see, they seemed to be humans. It was definitely a relief that what showed up was not demons, monsters or devils. The soldiers swiftly took a formation along the walls and focused their attention on the three students. Just what was going to happen?

Suimei still had his defensive magic at the ready. The wall of soldiers opened at the centre revealing a girl with red hair donning a pink dress and a girl with silver hair clad in a pure white robe which gave off the impression of a polished pearl. And then...

“Eh...?”

“Wha...?”

The two of them had made an expression that suggested they just came across a situation that they were not expecting at all. The two huddled closely together, likely with the intention of privately discussing the matter at hand. The red haired girl whispered to the silver haired girl.

“White Flame-dono. Wasn't it supposed to be a single hero who was summoned...?”

“Ye... Yes, it is just as you said.”

“However, there are three people here...”

“Ye... Yes... About that, this is merely my conjecture, however only one among them should be the hero. It is likely that among these three, two of them were caught up in the hero summoning ritual.”

“How could that be...? This kind of situation was never documented, nor have I ever heard of it.”

“Neither have I, your Highness. However there are in fact three people here who appeared to have been summoned.”

“So you're saying that it is highly probable that two of them are bystanders.”

They were talking in secret but to Suimei's magically enhanced hearing he had heard everything. It seemed that Reiji did as well. It was unexpected to Suimei that he was able to understand the language they were speaking. He could understand it all as if it was Japanese. However it was a mysterious rhythmical language that did not match any languages that Suimei knew of from Earth. What he was hearing wasn't Japanese, but he could definitely understand it like it was. It was as if he was listening to one language, but thinking about what he hears in another. It was difficult to put the sensation into words as it seemed to have become an instinct. This was probably an effect of a magic enchantment placed upon them as part of the summoning. It seemed to be a simple explanation, but it seemed to be true. At the least it was very convenient. The two were discussing summoning and heroes, so it seemed that Suimei had no more reason to be on guard. He discreetly cancelled the defensive magic that he had prepared. Reiji also released the tension in his body and relaxed his stance. Suimei turned to his two friends and spoke to Mizuki.

“... It seems this is an unexpected situation for them as well... Does this kind of development also exist Mizuki?”

“... Yeah. There are stories where the summoned hero's friends get caught up in the summoning, but...”

Mizuki suddenly made an expression like it was hard to explain further. Suimei tilted his head to the side. Just what was so difficult to explain?

“...?”

“Mizuki. Are you worried about something?”

“Um, in this kind of scenario, among the friends of the summoned hero – in our case that would be myself and Suimei – one of us will make a contract with an evil god and come into conflict with the hero.”

“Wha? What the hell is that? Why does something as extreme as an evil god suddenly come up?”

“I'm not really sure either...”

Mizuki began to shift around uneasily. Suimei was the one who wants to get anxious and shift around. Actually he would rather just run away. To suddenly have an evil god appear and make a contract, it was just too unreasonable. It would not be impossible if the evil god was sealed away as a faint existence here and the summoning ritual involved sacrificing thousands of people. Thus resulting in bringing forth the real form of an evil god. Suimei could only conjecture about the insane possibility as he felt a cold chill along the back of his neck. Reiji questioned Mizuki further.

“But come into conflict... Why would one of you suddenly come into conflict with me?”

“In this scenario either myself or Suimei would come to hate you as part of the influence of the evil god who is in natural opposition to the hero.”

“Eh?”

To this explanation Reiji made a pale and astonished face. Mizuki then started to stutter out a flustered denial.

“...O-Of course there's no way I could hate Reiji-kun. More like I actually l-l-l-l-l-lo...”

She must have been too embarrassed to say it directly to his face. Her voice steadily trailed off until it was completely inaudible. Reiji awkwardly turned his head towards Suimei.

“Th-Then... Suimei?”

“Fuu... To be honest I've always secretly thought you were a real-fag who should just explode.”

“— !!”

Suimei suddenly had a strange expression in his eyes as he spouted these dark

emotions and left Reiji at a loss for words.

“It's a joke, of course...”

“S-Suimei...”

“If I hated you I wouldn't have kept you company for the last 6 years. Just think about it.”

“T-That's right. Thank god...”

Having heard both their answers Reiji heaved a sigh of relief. While the three friends were having this interaction, the red haired girl with the air of a princess gracefully approached them and spoke up.

“Um, it seems you're in the middle of something, however is it alright for us to speak?”

“Y-Yes.”

Reiji responded to the girl with red hair whose forehead was featured quite prominently. In response she gave a graceful bow and addressed them.

“I must apologize for suddenly calling you forth. My name is Titania Root Astel. I am the second child of Almadius Root Astel, King of the Kingdom of Astel. I have called you forth to request your assistance with a certain matter.”

The large fore headed girl introduced herself in a formal matter. Princess Titania turned slightly to her side and the white robed girl beside her took a single step forwards.

“I am one of the Court Mage's of Astel, Felmenia Stingray. It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

It was the girl that the princess had previously referred to as White Flame. She had beautiful, long silver hair that extended down to her waist. Her hair was braided gracefully down both of her ears. Her slightly angled eyes revealed a hint of the girl's pride. She gave off a severe impression, however she still had charming features that one could not come to hate. As expected of one who calls herself a mage, mana was densely concentrated around her body. This also applied to the princess, but at a glance this girl gave of the impression that she would burn her foes with her magic.

(...Rather, is this woman the one who summoned us here? Dammit...)

Suimei grumbled to himself as he built up a grudge against her in his mind. After the girls had finished introducing themselves, Reiji stepped forward politely and began to introduce himself.

“I am very thankful for the courteous greeting. My name is Shana Reiji. If it's more familiar here to put the family name on last, then please call me Reiji Shana. These two with me are my friends. On my right is Mizuki Anou. On my left is Suimei Yakagi.”

Just where had he learned to speak so politely? As Reiji finished off his introductions the princess Titania and the mage Felmenia gave a simple look of admiration. Next, Mizuki rushed forwards to introduce herself.

“Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mizuki Anou...”

And then, Suimei also took a step forwards and took after Mizuki.

“I'm... Suimei Yakagi.”

He had introduced himself quite simply and quickly. He didn't really have anything to add on and wanted the conversation to move onto the more important points. It wasn't the appropriate situation to speak frivolously. As they finished introducing themselves, Titania gave a look at the three before her and then closed her eyes as if she was deeply regretting something. And then she spoke up.

“Reiji-sama, Mizuki-sama and Suimei-sama right? The reason we have summoned you forth today is...

One way or another, with your aid, there is something that we must accomplish no matter what.”

“That is?”

“Yes. Right now the peace of this world is being threatened by the demons lead by the Demon Lord Nakshatra. We would like you to defeat this Demon Lord.”

In response to these words that came from Princess Titania's mouth... Suimei, Reiji and Mizuki made the same expression as they got the exact explanation they were expecting. Only Suimei put a hand to his forehead and stared at the

ceiling hoping they would just let him go.



Having just received the explanation for being summoned from another world by the princess and Court Mage, for a moment the three friends, at least on the surface, seemed to take everything quite well as this was the template answer they were expecting. However on the inside it was true that they just wanted to give up.

“Ha...”

“Uuu...”

“Uwa...”

No longer able to keep up a calm appearance, the three of them broke out in a sigh simultaneously. At this strange reaction to her partial explanation, Titania continued in a somewhat bewildered voice.

“And so, I must apologize for hurrying along, but among the three of you which one is the hero?”

“Um...”

“That's...”

At this question, both Reiji and Mizuki gave off a troubled expression. There's no way anyone would know if they themselves were a hero. To the two of them, up to this point, they were both just normal citizens. If one were to ask whether or not they were heroes, it was obvious to reply that there was no way they could be a hero. Thus there should be no point in asking this sort of question... however it seems it would be a problem if this situation went on without a clear answer. The conversation was just not moving forwards. To push things along, Suimei asked a question.

“Can I ask something?”

“Yes, please ask away at your discretion.”

“Is there something to recognize who the target of the hero summoning magic is...? For example, is there some sort of proof like a symbol or something that would identify one as a hero?”

“Proof of being a hero... or a symbol?”

To this question, Titania turned towards Felmenia. Felmenia closed her eyes and looked downwards briefly, then turned towards Suimei and answered.

“Yes there should be an indication. When the hero is summoned by the ritual, as they cross between worlds, they receive divine protection from the elements. In other words they are granted great power. Therefore, among you three, one of you should be feeling an overwhelming sensation within themselves that could not be compared to anything they've ever experienced... Is there one among you who fit this criteria?”

“If that's the case, I think that applies to me. After coming here, I've felt myself overwhelmed by a sense of power that I've never felt before.” Reiji answered.

“Oooh”

The soldiers surrounding them started to raise a fuss in excitement.

(The elements... huh...)

Suimei murmured to himself with suspicion. Elements, astral bodies, spirits. Among these three words, elements was usually used when discussing the four or five elements or the world. Earth, water, fire and wind made up the four elements. If you include the conceptual void it made five. Elements were a key conceptual cornerstone of magic. But from Felmenia's tone it seemed to imply that they interpreted the elements as living beings. Even when considering foundations such as spiritual magic or magic which invoked the spirits of the dead, the nuance of her words was strange. But this was another world. It wasn't guaranteed that phenomena here worked like they did back home. Though it seems there wasn't a great difference between their worlds, the way these phenomena differed may in fact be what makes this world unique from his own...

“So you are the hero...?”

“Eh... Ah, yes.”

While Suimei was deep in thought analyzing the elements of this world, Titania gazed at Reiji with passionate eyes. It could be that she held a longing for that figure known as the hero. Add on the fact that Reiji was quite handsome and it seemed natural. Reiji seemed somewhat bewildered to this. Suddenly, Titania took Reiji's hands into her own.

“Hero-sama, it is extremely presumptuous of me, but please, please lend us your

assistance.”

“Eh-Ehhhhh!?”

“Y-Your Highness!?”

At the sudden development, the robed mage Felmenia was also quite startled and called out to Titania in a flustered voice. Hearing this, Titania suddenly realized what she was doing and let go of Reiji's hands while blushing.

“Ah, I must apologize Hero-sama. I of all people should not lose my composure like that... From here we should head to the audience room where his Majesty the King will explain things in further detail. We will wait for your answer then.”

“I-I understand.”

Still bewildered by the sudden escalation, Reiji somehow managed to give his acknowledgement. To this, Felmenia stepped forwards once more.

“H-Hero-sama. Allow me to introduce myself once more. I am Felmenia Stingray.”

“Ah-it's a pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

“From here on, I believe we are likely to work together. At that time, I look forwards to working with you.”

“Eh? Ah... yes.”

Felmenia mixed in a greeting that seemed like some sort of nonchalant appeal.

Reiji didn't quite understand her intent, but managed to give some sort of reply anyways. Titania followed up by clearing out her throat quite intentionally to grab their attention.

“White Flame-dono?”

“M-My apologies. I'm getting ahead of myself.”

“... Well then, please come this way. I will introduce you before his Majesty the King.”

At Titania's words, the soldiers once again formed rank and opened a path to Suimei and his friends.





Suimei and company followed the soldiers down the unfamiliar, gloomy stone corridor which was illuminated by candlesticks mounted on the walls. They soon emerged from the stone corridor into a much brighter marble corridor. It was a stark contrast to the path they had been taking earlier. Elaborate ornaments decorated the walls and everything was kept very clean. There were works of art, stands of armour and paintings here and there, all of which depicted things they were unfamiliar with. It seems this truly was another world. It really did seem to be a fantasy world of swords and magic. While the three friends were observing their surroundings, it seemed they also attracted the eyes of quite a few onlookers as they walked along.

Titania, maybe in a bid to receive a good reply from Reiji concerning her earlier request, was walking next to him and talking to him continuously for the entire duration. She started by asking what kind of world the hero had come from but soon transitioned to asking about his age and hobbies. It soon just looked like a girl in love walking alongside a boy her age. To so quickly gain the favour of a cute girl, Suimei was in fact just a little jealous. However, Mizuki who was walking on Reiji's other side, was definitely not calm about the entire situation. She wasn't Reiji's girlfriend, but among all the girls they were acquainted with, she was the closest to it. She was definitely aiming for this position for some time now. Now imagine what she would feel when a beautiful, noble girl was now intimately talking and keeping close to her love interest. It did not show on her face, but she was definitely pouting about it. As for the other girl, the Court Mage Felmenia...

“... Is there something wrong?”

“... No, nothing in particular.”

For quite some time now, she has been repeatedly turning back and and sneaking peeks at Suimei with a sharp gaze. Having noticed this and being somewhat bothered by her curiosity, Suimei had questioned her. However Felmenia looked forwards and continued walking as if nothing had happened. Suimei grumbled inwardly.

(... Was it a mistake to be on guard with magic? From her expression it seems likely that she saw through the fact that I can use magic.)

One blunder just followed another. Suimei has been making enough

mistakes today that he just wanted to disappear in shame, however he couldn't afford to have his mind in such poor mental shape at this time. The existence of magic and magicians was something that must be kept secret. In his world, this was an absolute necessity. In the world dominated by science, magic could only be seen as heresy. If they ever took centre stage, there was no doubt a purge of magicians would begin. However it seemed quite different in this world. An existence such as a Court Mage was now walking alongside the princess, and did not seem to be lower in social standing to her. Even so it would be foolish to reveal that he himself was a practitioner of magic. First and foremost it was imperative that the two normal citizens of his world, Reiji and Mizuki, do not find out. In that case, just what course should he take to seal Felmenia's mouth. It seemed it was necessary to make preparations against her.

“We've arrived. This is the entrance to the audience chamber of his Majesty the King. Now then, let us proceed.”

They came to a stop in front of an enormous and luxurious door that seemed more appropriate to use for giants. One of their escorts hailed the guard standing before the door. The guard then started to murmur something. Before long, the door began to slowly open on its own.

“Wha!?”

“Ehhh!?”

Reiji and Mizuki both suddenly raised a surprised voice. It seems they were both shocked that the door was opening on its own without anyone taking any sort of action. The guard at the door didn't so much as touch the door, and they did not see any automated mechanisms in their surroundings. They both had no idea just how this had happened. Reflexively, Reiji asked Titania for an explanation.

“H-How did it open?”

“... By magic. Was it to your liking?”

“Ah... is that so? This world has magic after all.”

“This world?”

“In our world there is no such thing as the power known as magic.”

“Is that true!?”

“Yes.”

“... I see, so this would be the first time you've ever seen magic.”

Titania made an ecstatic smile, seemingly pleased at the deep admiration the Hero seemed to hold in his voice. Felmenia however, turned to Reiji abruptly and asserted herself in a flustered voice.

“I-I can also easily accomplish things of this level.”

“Is that so?”

“Even though I may not appear as such, I am still a splendid Court Mage of the Astel Kingdom.”

“Heeh... Felmenia-san is also amazing huh?”

“Y-Yeah... eheheh.”

Felmenia suddenly became bashful at Reiji's straightforward flattery. Was she just weak to words of praise? Or was it because she was being praised by the Hero? Her carefree smile created quite a gap with her usually harsh expression and was actually quite charming. To the side, Mizuki was staring at the large door opening with a sparkle in her eyes.

“Amazing. Magic exists here after all.”

Mizuki seemed to have quite the interest in magic. She was a girl who loved stories which involved magic. It is predictable then, that she had a dark past she would rather keep secret because of her obsession with fantasy. In comparison, Suimei had of course noticed the activation of magic. He could not hear the incantation that the guard had used. However, the composition of the magic, the expansion of the formula, the bestowal of intent, the effect and invocation were all observed by him.

“Wind, right?”

The magic used to open the door was quite simple. The spell used invoked three verses. Using wind as an attribute, it was a magic which physically pushed the door open. The invocation was fluently executed in an exemplary way however...

(Hmmm... But why wind? If they only need to open the door why go through the trouble of using an attribute as an intermediary? No matter how you look at it, for a magic of this level, a chant using three verses is ignoring practicality a little too much...)

Suimei was the only one astonished at the inefficiency of the magic used which seemed like complete overkill. The ability of the guard was actually quite good. However practically speaking all he had to do was invoke magic to open the door. To optimize the amount of mana used, it was sufficient to construct and invoke movement magic to create the same effect. It was such a simple thing, but Suimei could not understand why the guard had to unnaturally apply wind as an attribute to the spell. This additional enchantment not only adds to the length of the chant, but it also increases the required amount of mana. In other words, it only increased the amount of time and mana required, there was only demerits. Speaking frankly, for this kind of magic, it was not even necessary to use an incantation at all. If it was Suimei, or rather if it was any magician from his world, it was possible to create the same effect of opening the door with just a snap of the fingers. In comparison, just how much time and mana did they waste on opening the door? Suimei was simply unable to understand any of it.

(Well, maybe it is just the guard's hobby?)

After concluding such, Suimei finally calmed down and organized his thoughts. It seems that applying wind as an attribute to the magic used for opening and shutting the door was simply because the guard wanted to. Suimei came to this conclusion. In the first place there was no reason for him to nit pick about the guard's use of magic. He simply had a habit of analyzing the efficiency of magic whenever he witnessed it. While Suimei was thinking about all this, Titania suddenly began to address him.

“Suimei-sama didn't seem to be surprised by magic huh?”
(... Crap.)

Suimei grumbled to himself briefly before replying.

“Eh? A-Ah. I was just far too surprised to react... Hahaha.”
“Ara, is that so? If you're this surprised from just this level of magic, then you may not even be able to stand if you witness the Court Mages practising.”
“Are they really that amazing? Aha, I'm at a loss huh~”
“Ufufu...”

Titania began to laugh cheerfully in a lady-like manner. Suimei could not possibly say that this was astonishing in a whole different way. Felmenia then

called out to Titania.

“You Highness, it is about time.”

“Yes. Well then Hero-sama, Mizuki-sama, Suimei-sama, please follow me.”

Pressed on by those words, everyone followed after Titania through the door. Past the doors was an enormous audience room. The enormous, rectangular room was spotted by several massive stone pillar which went up all the way to the ceiling. The quality of the construction of the room could not even be compared to the passages they have been walking through up to this point.

“Uwa...”

“Amazing...”

“Oooh...”

At the sight of the audience chamber, the three friends let out an astonished voice at the same time. They all understood just how amazing the construction of this audience hall was. Even Suimei who did not react to the earlier magic could not help but be captivated by the scene. In the depths of the audience chamber, placed right at the centre was a dazzling throne. Sitting atop the throne was an intense man who gave off a great aura of authority. This was most likely the King, Almadios Root Astel.

He had neatly arranged, short, blonde hair and a splendid long beard. To his side was an elderly man who seems to be his close confidant. Seemingly forming a line up to the throne were a large number of important looking individuals. Titania paid no attention to the people surrounding them and pushed forwards with a strong gaze facing forwards. As she approached the steps leading up to the throne, she knelt before the King. Next to her, Felmenia also knelt down. At a loss to this scene playing before them, Suimei and company hurriedly imitated the two girls. As all members present knelt before the King, Titania raised her voice.

“I, Titania Root Astel, have come forth with the hero from another world brought to us by the hero summoning ritual.”

“Excellent, you have been of great assistance Titania. However, why are there three heroes present?”

The King had asked this in a puzzled tone. In Titania's place, Felmenia gave a response.

“Yes. The two other people present are Hero-dono's friends. It seems that they had mistakenly gotten caught up in the summoning.”

“How can that be!? Mistakenly caught up in you said!?”

“Yes. It is very likely the case.”

At these words, the intense expression of the King had transformed into an expression of shock. From all around the audience chambers phrases such as “What happened” or “I've never heard of this kind of thing?” were being whispered around between individuals. The King turned his gaze towards Felmenia.

“Is such a thing really possible? The hero summoning ritual has been performed by other countries as well, I've never heard of this kind of situation before.”

“That's... I'm still a fledgling who does not possess much information in this regard, however in reality there are people who have been caught up in the ritual present before us. So...”

“That people have been caught up in the summoning is the truth... Is that what you want to say?”

“Yes, it is very likely the case.”

As their conversation approached its end, the King's expression changed once more to a very grim expression. Mizuki whispered to the others.

“He said the summoning has been performed multiple times. Does that mean there are others in this world who have been summoned over?”

“From his manner of speech it seems likely. Or rather, just how evil is the Demon Lord of this world...?”

Suimei whispered a simple reply to Mizuki without flinching. He felt somewhat sorry for all these refugees from other worlds, but was more surprised that the existence which threatened the world seemed to be so dangerous that it had required multiple heroes to be summoned.

“On top of that, it seems our case is the first of its kind.”

“Ahaha... Our situation is truly pitiful huh...”

While the three of them were whispering among themselves, the King's conversation with Felmenia had come to an end. Letting go of his grim expression, he turned his gaze towards the three of them.

“Hero-dono, I must apologize for summoning you so abruptly to this place. I am the the thirteenth King of the Astel Kingdom, Almadious Root Astel. And this is my castle, Camellia Castle. Having been brought to my audience with no prior notification, it is inevitable that you must be nervous. Please, I wish for you to be at ease.”

As the King introduced himself and mixed in his appreciation for their cooperation, Titania whispered something into Reiji's ears. It was likely that she was informing him what the formal response would be to the King's request. However, Reiji suddenly stood up against all expectations.

“Wha...?”

Suimei and the surrounding crowd raised their voice in bewilderment. To put it bluntly this was a ridiculous development. The reason for this was that unlike the modern world, in this country which resembled the Middle Ages, the King stood atop of all authority in the country. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that they were an existence treated as close to God. To stand up face to face in front of such a person was just something that did not happen.

“It's alright. Hero-sama is the man who was called forth to save the world. His position is not in any way inferior to ours. Therefore there is no problem at all for him to speak on equal terms with my father.”

“I-Is that right...?”

Having noticed Suimei's apprehensions, Titania explained the situation in a low voice. It seems there would be no problems. Suimei was worried at just what was going to happen because of this, but for now he was relieved. Reiji then bowed before the King and began to speak.

“Your Highness, I am called Reiji Shana. It is an honour to be allowed an audience with you on this occasion.”

“Are you the hero from another world?”

“Yes.”

The surrounding crowd began to stir as Reiji gave his confirmation of the King's question. Whispers such as “So that is the Hero?” or “He certainly has a divine presence.” began to spread throughout the hall. It seems they had all been enchanted by Reiji. As the voices of the crowd began to die down, the King once more spoke to Reiji.

“Then the two people behind you are your friends?”

“Yes, I am his friend Mizuki Anou.”

“I'm Suimei Yakagi.”

Mizuki and Reiji raised their heads and responded to the King while still kneeling. They who were not heroes like Reiji would definitely cause problems if they imitated him and stood up.

“Umu. I must deeply apologize to the both of you for summoning you as well. It was caused by our deficiencies, it may seem that this is just to our self satisfaction, but please accept my deepest apologies.”

“Yes.”

“Ha...”

They gave a brief reply to the King while still kneeling before him. The King had, in his own way, given the humblest apology that he could given his stature. In a sense it almost didn't even sound like an apology, but he truly seemed to be deeply regretful of the situation. Whispers started to become audible from the surroundings again, “It is a waste of such graceful words” or “Such compassion”. There was a stark contrast to when they were clamouring about Reiji. The King gave a forceful cough and continued to speak.

“There is something I must speak of with you, Hero-dono. However let us call today's audience to an end. It was such a sudden summoning. You must still be bewildered by everything that is happening.”

“Eh...”

“Hero-dono, and also to your dear friends. After this, we shall hold an evening party alongside a banquet in Camellia's reception hall. After the party and having a chance to settle down, we will enter our discussions of the main issue tomorrow.”

It seemed the major point of their request was being pushed off by a day. In its stead they were being offered hospitality to relax for the evening. This must

have been a special consideration from the King. It seemed that the sudden summoning also weighed heavily on his mind. At the mention of the evening party, the atmosphere of the gathered crowd also lightened up. However, there was one person who did not go along with the change in mood.

“Your Highness. If possible, I would like us to move onto the main issue at the hand right now in this place.”

“Hero-dono, is the acceptable? You have just arrived here, you haven't yet had the chance to settle down your mind have you not?”

“That is true... However, this is something we must face eventually anyways. I would rather hear it sooner than later.”

“... Understood. If Hero-dono wishes for that to be so, let us talk.”

After briefly considering it deeply, the King agreed to Reiji's request. Suimei however, was in complete opposition to this development.

(Ah... This damn justice filled idiot!)

While making a grim face, Suimei complained inwardly about his friend. This sort of flow was bad. Things were progressing too quickly. Reiji was being far too impatient. It should be obvious, he hadn't consulted the other two about this situation at all. While remaining in a kneeling position, Suimei tugged on Reiji's pants and whispered to him.

“O-Oi! Reiji! What the hell do you intend to do!? If you ask that now you'll have to give an answer right away you know!? Or rather it should be obvious that...”

“Suimei, it's alright. Leave it to me.”

“No, forget leaving it to you, rather... Reijiiiiiii!”

Before Suimei could finish speaking, Reiji took a step forwards and shook Suimei's hand off of his trousers. Suimei could only cry out Reiji's name in complaint in a low voice. This was a conversation that Suimei absolutely did not want to be responsible for. To defeat a Demon Lord from another world, just what kind of ridiculous fantasy story was this supposed to be? It was insane to pick a fight with someone whose war potential and combat potential were completely unknown. Moreover there was no reason for them to hear of that kind of information in the first place. On top of that, Suimei himself had a reason to return home immediately. He still had yet to accomplish the will of his

departed father. Until he has accomplished this, he absolutely could not die.

It can be said that to the magicians who lived in an underworld society, betting their lives on matters could be their duty. However that did not mean that they would put their lives on the line for just anything that came their way.

It should be obvious. While worrying about such things, Suimei turned his gaze to Reiji's back. If one thought about it reasonably, there was no way anyone would agree to this kind of proposition. But here they were talking about this softhearted fool. Suimei could not discount the fact that he would just nod and agree. As Reiji stepped forward, the King continued the conversation.

“How much have you heard so far?”

“Just before this, her Highness the Princess had requested that I defeat the Demon Lord. Other than that I have heard no further details.”

“I see. Then... Gless.”

The King gave a nod, then briefly turned towards the middle-aged man who had been standing beside him, urging him forwards with his eyes. It must have been a signal, the man he had called Gless stepped forwards.

“I am Gless Dillez, the prime minister of the Kingdom of Astel. I will explain the current situation to you.”

“Thank you very much.”

“Further to the north of our Astel Kingdom, separated by two other countries, there was a country known as the country of snow. The Noshias Kingdom.

Their kingdom served as the bulwark which separated the lands of demons and humans. They have held back the advances of the demons into human territory for a long time... About half a year ago, the demon army had struck like lightning and toppled the capitol city. Noshias was not able to reform as a country at this loss, and was brought to ruin.”

The prime minister Gless continued his explanation with a grim countenance.

“The people of Noshias were able to live even in the most extreme of climates.

They held pride in their strength that couldn't be compared to the people who lived in more normal climates. Their armies were also vast and strong.

However before a force of demons over a million strong, it was as if the army was not there at all. Before this never-ending assault, the entire country collapsed in under a month.”

Mizuki looked terrified and unable to speak, but pushed on an inquiry nonetheless.

“Umm, you say collapsed, what happened to the people of Noshias...?”

“The demons have no need for human prisoners. During the invasion the vast majority of Noshias' citizens were killed. The ones who managed to escape the initial onslaught were hunted down. There are very likely next to no survivors unless they were extremely lucky. The number of surviving Noshias citizens could probably be counted on one hand.”

“Hunted down, that's horrible...”

“That is just the kind of existence the demons are. They despise humanity and treat us like insects. They are evil beings who only acknowledge their own strength. While we would be willing to come to a compromise at a table of discussion, they would be more likely to use that chance to simply strike at us.”

Mizuki's face became extremely pale from Gless' explanation. Genocide. Human hunting. These words likely engraved fear on the girl's heart. It was difficult to swallow all the words coming from Gless' mouth. But up until the genocide this talk of demons was still identical to the stories they had found in their lighthearted novels.

“... After Noshias' fall, an Oracle from the Salvation Church revealed the existence of a Demon Lord who had emerged and taken control of all demons. This demon's name is Nakshatra. It was judged that such an existence which could organize the unruly mob of demons would eventually destroy humanity.”

Gless took a brief pause before continuing on.

“Thus, in response to the Oracle proclaiming the potential destruction of humanity, a conference was held between all nations to decide on countermeasures to the demon invasion. Many hypothetical plans for breaking the demon invasion were brought up and put down. But before the strength of the demon army which far surpassed anything that humanity could muster, no plan could be put in place to escape the situation.”

Gless then suddenly turned his gaze towards Reiji.

“And so, all the nations came upon an agreement to throw all of their hopes into

the hero summoning ritual which has been used since time immemorial. Only with the permission of the Mage's Guild and the Salvation Church was the ritual allowed to be performed. Only when humanity had fallen into the pits of despair would they summon a hero from another world. If nations who only ever held their own national interests in mind had begun to summon heroes whenever they wanted, the entire world would be thrown into chaos after all.”

“Are there that many global disasters in this world....?”

Reiji raised an eyebrow and asked this question. Inside his own mind he must have been screaming “Humanity in this world faces far too many crisis!”.

“Yes. From memory, Giants who would eat all living beings had appeared twice. Tyrants who had tried to conquer the entire world had appeared three times. Similarly to this time, a Demon Lord leading hosts of demons had appeared six times. Thus on this occasion, to evade the coming crisis, four countries, including our Astel Kingdom, were tasked with carrying out the hero summoning ritual.”

“Four countries...”

At this unexpected revelation, Suimei let out a small murmur. Who would have thought that there were other pitiful fools out there having the unreasonable request of defeating the Demon Lord pushed upon them? If this was an insurance policy in case some parties do not accept the request, then there was no need for them to go out of their way and accept it.

“And one of the ones who were summoned would be us?”

To Reiji's question Gless had closed his eyes and nodded.

“That is precisely it.”

Gless' countenance then somehow had managed to become even more grim.

“Though the demon invasion has slowed down for now, in the near future they will proceed with trampling the nations of humanity. Our land as well will have no choice but to fall prey to the oncoming onslaught just like Noshias had.”

All colour had vanished from Gless' face at this point. His voice had also gotten heavy. He was giving Reiji eyes that were begging for compassion. It's

possible that some parts of this was just an act. It was somewhat repulsive, but seeing how an international committee had decided on the countries which would enact the summoning ritual, it was also possible that Astel Kingdom's honour and reliability in the eyes of the international community were tied directly to their success at using the Hero. The prime minister must consider the fate of his country regardless of the oncoming demons, so putting out this sort of act would be a simple price to pay to keep his country in good standing. Even so Suimei was unable to suppress his irritation at the whole situation. As Gless had finished his explanation, the King once more spoke up.

“Hero-dono. Would you somehow be willing to undertake the task of saving all of humanity's citizens in this world?”

“...”

“How will it be?”

Reiji had hung his head deep in thought. The King prodded for an answer one more time.

(The answer should be obvious Reiji. I'm begging you...)

Suimei who had absolutely no intention of getting involved with any of this, prayed secretly that Reiji would turn down the request. Since Suimei was a magician, in order to protect himself and his research, he had some level of live combat experience. But even so he had no intention of participating in any unreasonable battles. Obviously, he also did not want to die. While carrying these anxieties in his heart, Suimei earnestly prayed to the living God Shana Reiji for a swift rejection. It seemed that time had stopped and everyone had held their breath waiting for a response from Reiji. After a while, he finally opened his mouth to give his response.

“This request, I will wholeheartedly undertake it.”

(That's right. He won't do it. There's no way he would accept... wha?)

Suimei nodded to himself and suddenly stopped to confirm what he had just heard. Just what did that idiot say...? “I will wholeheartedly undertake it.”

(O...oi. Oioioioioiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!)

He agreed. He really did it. Suimei had thought that he had misheard at first, but Reiji definitely agreed to undertake the request.

“I see! That is-”

“Just wait a minuuuuuuute!!”

This could absolutely not be forgiven. Suimei's scream echoed throughout the audience chamber as he drowned out the King's delighted voice. Even Suimei was surprised at just how loud a voice he had just let out. The entire audience chamber was rendered speechless by his actions. On top of all that he had just rudely yelled over the King who was in the middle of talking. But could he really be blamed from snapping after all of these unreasonable situations happening to him? On the other hand, the softhearted idiot who had just agreed to the King's request was making a face that he had no idea what was going on.

“S-Suimei, what is it all of a sudden? Don't suddenly yell like that.”

“It wasn't sudden and of course I'll yell you stupid simpleton! Why the hell did you accept!? Has your brain rotted!? They just told you to kill someone so dangerous that they could destroy the world you know!? They're telling you to fight his subordinates that number in the millions, do you really understand!?

You didn't even consult myself or Mizuki and you just agree? That is far stranger than yelling in this situation!”

Suimei had yelled all this at Reiji in a single breath. His breathing had gotten ragged and he was giving Reiji quite the intense stare. Reiji didn't seem bothered by any of this, and replied with a straightforward gaze.

“But because of that Demon Lord there are many people going through horrible experiences. If they haven't yet they might soon. The people of this world have pinned their last hopes on a Hero, and called me. Therefore, I think I must do everything that I can to help.”

“No, just why does it have to be like that!? We don't have any sort of obligation to these people!”

“Yeah. It's true that this is the first time we've come to this world. It's just as Suimei says, we have no obligation to them. But we are now connected to them by fate. They are living people that we've become connected to you know? We don't have any obligation to them now, but that is something we'll be building up from now on isn't it?”

Reiji started to spout out some cool philosophical phrases. Just how was a high school kid spouting this sort of line in this kind of serious situation?

Suimei had experienced it many times in the last six years but still wondered about it.

“That may be so... but now isn't the time for that! More importantly there's no way you can do anything about the situation on your own!”

Though he had agreed with Reiji's point, Suimei still stayed his course and brought up the most obvious issue at hand. Reiji was just a student. Unlike Suimei, Reiji had only ever fought off delinquents at most. It's not like Reiji had no idea how to fight, but there was no way he could win a fight to the death. Even so, Reiji shook his head to Suimei.

“We don't know that. Right now I can feel a tremendous power within me. With this power, it might just be possible to defeat the Demon Lord.”

“Whaaaaat tremendous power you dumb-ass!? Screw defeating the Demon Lord! Don't you understand the great words 'A fight is determined by the numbers Aniki!'? No matter how strong you've gotten, if you think about it normally there's no way you can win before an army numbering in the millions!”
“No, if we don't try we won't know that. It's the truth that previously summoned heroes have in fact saved this world.”

Certainly what he had just said was true. But that's only word of mouth that can be said by the people who had won. Therefore.

“Those are only the results.”

“Those results are the unshakable truth. Also to be honest, there's no way I could abandon people in need. It may be stupid, but I want to cooperate with the people from this world.”

“Reiji, once again you're...”

Suimei was slightly disheartened at Reiji's words. It may have been a sense of pity. This was Reiji's illness. Anytime he saw someone in trouble he would immediately throw himself into the fray. It was just the kind of human Reiji was. It had always been like this. From the day Suimei had met Reiji, this had never changed. He would run around for the sake of others, get his friends involved and in the end he would save everyone. He was a strong human whose weakness was that he could not ignore the weak. This was Shana Reiji. Suimei

knew this very well.

“... Suimei. If you don't want to I won't forcefully ask you to come along. To be honest it would be reassuring to have you at my side, but the hero who received power is me alone. It is fine if you don't come along.”

“You... Certainly I am completely against going but, with just that....!”

“Yeah. I know. You're worried about me. Whenever I haven't thought about it enough, it is always Suimei who follows up for me.”

It was sly of him to speak of such things in a gentle tone. It's because he was like this that Suimei could never leave him alone, and was always dragged along with his actions. However, in this case specifically...

“... I am absolutely not going. I don't want to get involved in any of this. I also don't want to die.”

It was useless. Going along was just not a choice to Suimei. No matter how he analyzed the situation it was all too reckless.

“Got it. Sorry. Suimei.”

“If you're going to apologize don't do it in the first place dammit.”

To Reiji's heartfelt apology, Suimei could only give a response that he had given up convincing him. Then, Reiji turned to Mizuki.

“I am going to go to defeat the Demon Lord. Therefore, Mizuki, I want you to wait together with Suimei.”

Standing before Reiji's determination, Mizuki had hung her head and started shaking. Just what was this girl thinking? After some time had passed in silence, Mizuki shook off her fears and resolutely faced Reiji.

“... Uun, I'm going to go with Reiji-kun.”

“Wha!?”

“Mizuki...”

“Oi, you too, Mizuki...?”

Suimei could only raise a baffled voice. To think another one of his friends would say such a thing with no sense of reality. It seems this time Reiji shared

Suimei's opinion.

“I can't allow it Mizuki. What I am about to take on here is a matter of life and death. So I cannot take you along. I don't want to see you in a dangerous situation.”

At Reiji's rejection to her request, Mizuki vigorously began shaking her head.

“If you don't defeat the Demon Lord then it won't be peaceful anywhere in the world. Eventually it won't matter where we are, it'll all be the same. That's why I want to be of use to Reiji-kun, even if it is only a little. I don't know what exactly I can do. I don't know if I want to save the people of this world the same way that Reiji-kun does. But regardless of all that, I want to accompany Reiji-kun.”

“... It's dangerous. I might not be able to protect you Mizuki.”

“Un. If it ever comes to it, I don't mind if you even abandon me. That's why...”

That was definitely a lie. However Mizuki wanted to accompany the man she had fallen in love with no matter what. After putting some thought into it, Reiji replied.

“I got it. If Mizuki is willing to take it so far, then let us do this together.

However, I will never abandon Mizuki no matter what.”

“Un...”

Reiji consented to her participation. She was happy that she had been acknowledged by Reiji, however after having mustered all of her courage, tears had started to form on her eyes.

“Your Majesty. I accept the task of subjugating the Demon Lord. The ones participating in the subjugation will be myself and Mizuki, just us two.”

“Understood. Mizuki-dono, is this truly alright?”

“Yes!”

Mizuki gave a cheerful reply with a brilliant smile on her face. The King then turned towards Suimei.

“As I expect, Suimei-dono...”

“I will not fight against such an absurd number of enemies. Therefore, I will not

be accompanying these two.”
“I see...”

The King gave a disappointed, or actually a very apologetic look towards Suimei. It seemed he was genuinely worried about having summoned an unrelated party. In stark contrast, the surrounding audience were all turning cold gazes at Suimei as they whispered among themselves. “That young girl decided to participate, but when it comes to the boy...” or “It’s like he has no backbone.” These sorts of disgusted and irritated words were bounced around the hall.

(They’re all just saying whatever they want from their safe place without doing anything themselves. Though I guess since I decided not to along I’m not one to speak... More importantly, there is something else that needs discussing.)

Suimei was getting fed up with the whole situation and briefly sighed his complaints inwardly. There was something far more important that he must ask of the King.

“Your Majesty. I have one request I would ask of you, is that alright?”

The surrounding starting yelling phrases like “How shameless!” and “You are in no position to make a request of his Majesty the King you bastard!” These cries were filling the audience hall however Suimei simply ignored them. The King responded without changing his tone from before.

“Speak your request.”

“Yes. I won’t participate in the subjugation of the Demon Lord, so I would like to be returned to my own world.”

That was right, Suimei would not be taking part in any fighting. Therefore, he had no reason to take a stop in this world. He desired to use the hero summoning ritual magic to return back home as quickly as possible. However, for some reason the King was not giving him any reply.

“...”

Instead, a deathly silence swept through the entire audience hall. Suimei took a look around. Reiji was giving off a confused look as he had no idea what was going on. Mizuki made a face like she just figured out what was going on.

Titania and Felmenia were giving off a sour expression as the colour had drained from their faces. This poor complexion could only be attributed to something bad. Suimei had just requested to return home. In reaction to this, the two of them had started making faces like that. Judging from this, Suimei could only come up with a single hypothesis.

“Oi, wait a second. It can't be...”

At this point Suimei had completely forgotten to use any sort of polite speech before the King. It was inevitable. If his hypothesis was correct, it simply wasn't the time to be acting polite. After a while, the King seemed to gather his determination and began speaking.

“It is inexcusable, but I cannot return you back to your world. It is not that I would not like to return you. A method to return you to your world does not exist here.”

At these words, Suimei's brows began to twitch. Entirely aware that he was being disrespectful, Suimei asked for confirmation once more.

“... I'm sorry. I didn't hear you correctly. Could you repeat that?”

“A method to return you home does not exist. Therefore I am unable to return you home.”

This was the decisive blow. Suimei then unintentionally let out a cry with all his strength.

“Y-You're fucking kidding meeeeeeeeeee!!”

For the second time that day, Suimei's voice echoed throughout the entire audience hall.



What had happened in the audience chamber created a great uproar that could not be compared to any incident since the founding of the Kingdom of Astel. The King had informed Suimei that he could not return him to his world. Suimei had responded by yelling in a fit of anger at the top of his lungs.

“You can't send us back but you call us anyways!? Aren't you just an idiot!?”
“No matter how you look at it you're just being selfish, you damn fool!”
“You blockhead!”

He had yelled all of this at the King. Having heard the words he absolutely did not want to hear from the King, Suimei simply lost all of his sense of reason. He let out all of his anger in one go, ignoring where he was or who he was speaking to. He had long lost his ability to carefully analyze the situation... This may actually have been the most normal reaction to the ridiculous state of affairs after being summoned by another world.

Anyways, this had become a serious situation where the King might be attacked. The leaders of the nation and soldiers had rushed in to restrain Suimei. The situation had truly escalated into a serious problem. Having judged just how dangerous this had become, Reiji and Mizuki acted as mediators with the King and somehow managed to pull everything through peacefully. Suimei had been dragged off still in a state of extreme anger and pushed off into a room allocated to him. Suimei started to calm himself down by curling up and hugging his own stomach in his new temporary room.

“Fuck. Seriously? Is this seriously happening...?”

Suimei was at his wits end. He had tried doubting multiple times that this was in fact reality. No matter how hard he pinched and pulled at his cheeks, he would still find himself in this temporary room given to him looking out at the same unfamiliar scenery of a foreign kingdom out the window. Thrust into this unreasonable reality, Suimei's anguish only got worst. Suimei began screaming at the people responsible who were not present before him.

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah! I just want to return!! I don't know any spells to create a bridge between worlds dammit!!”

The summoning magic used to bring them to this world was different from the summoning magic that Suimei was familiar with. The aspect of being able to call forth a target was the same. But the aspect of being able to create a bridge between dimensions made it fundamentally impossible to Suimei. If the summoning was from another nearby planet it may have been possible. But to summon something from a different planet, from a parallel dimension whose existence could not even be proven was not something that had ever been

accomplished with magic in Suimei's world. Since he had crossed over from his world to this one, some sort of connection had to exist. But even if the path existed the transportation magic to use it was only developed to use it in one direction. If used incorrectly it was possible to derail like a train part way and end up somewhere where the situation would become truly irreversible. At that point, Suimei would lose absolutely everything.

“Tch...”

Suimei let out a groan filled with anguish. It may have been an accident, but having been a target of the summoning, a path that connects both worlds definitely existed. It may just be useless resistance, but Suimei had no choice but to rely on this fact.

“Please connect, Mary...”

Telepathic communication magic... Thanks to the spread of cellphones, it is a magic that had simply become a fossil of the past. Suimei attempted to use it to contact an acquaintance. Hydemary Alzbayne. In his world, this was the girl with whom he had worked with the most when it came to jobs for the Society. If he was able to contact her it would be possible to strengthen the path. Even if he could not return, it would be possible to prevent getting completely stuck with no path back at all.

“Fuck!!”

It was impossible after all. It seems the distance between worlds could not be overcome for any sort of communication.

“If it's come to this, I'll have to figure out a way back on my own....”

To this impossible challenge that he had to overcome, Suimei let out a huge sigh. Not returning was not an option. It was a completely non-existent option for him. He had something that he absolutely had to accomplish. For this reason he must return to his own world.

“Suuuu....”

Suimei suddenly took in a deep breath. And...

“I'm definitely returning home you hear meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!?”

Having made his resolution, Suimei gave out a thunderous cry.



A few days after Suimei and company were summoned to this other world, Reiji and Mizuki stood before Court Mages and knights in the outdoor training grounds of Camellia Castle.

“It's finally time huh, Reiji-kun?”

“Yeah.”

Reiji nodded to Mizuki who seemed unable to contain her excitement standing beside him. This was because at that time, they were about to be trained in magic by Titania, the Court Mages and knights. Mizuki's excitement was obvious, but Reiji was also unable to hide the fact that his blood had started to boil in excitement.

“Magic huh. I never thought the day would come where we would be able to use it.”

It was something unthinkable back in their own world. In their world it was simply a dream that anybody would see. It was an unattainable power which only existed in fictitious fantasy. Yet that was no longer the case.

“Now that I think about it, this is another world after all huh...?”

Being gripped by a sudden pang of loneliness, Mizuki hung her head down. The feelings that she held deep in her heart were beginning to spill out. This was inevitable. It was not just Suimei who had received a strong shock from being told they were unable to return home. This girl who decided to come along to defeat the Demon Lord was the same. Reiji also understood the loneliness of never again meeting their loved ones.

“Mizuki...”

“Ah! S-sorry! I got all gloomy.”

“No, it's alright. I understand the feeling.”

“Un...”

“It's alright Mizuki, I will definitely protect you.”

It was ultimately Reiji who had spurred her on to dive into danger. Hence it was only natural that he would shoulder the burden of keeping her safe. For some reason, even though their discussion was quite serious, Mizuki had suddenly started to blush.

“R-Reiji-kun! C-could that possibly mean...?”

“Huh? What's wrong?”

“That's...”

“...?”

“Ah... that's right. It's Reiji-kun after all huh...”

Reiji could not understand what was going on. After suddenly realizing something Mizuki gave out an astonished and disappointed voice and started grumbling. Reiji truly could not understand what had affected her so strongly from their conversation, but Mizuki suddenly started worrying about another anxiety that had been bothering her.

“I wonder if Suimei-kun is alright...”

Mizuki was worrying about her other friend, her classmate Yakagi Suimei. Ever since the uproar in the audience chamber, he had completely shut himself in the room given to him. The shock of being told he couldn't go home affected him greatly. Reiji and Mizuki had called out to him in worry through the door multiple times, but they only ever got halfhearted replies. They still didn't have a full understanding of his current condition. To wash away Mizuki's anxiety, Reiji turned to her with a smile.

“There's no need to worry. It's Suimei after all, after several days he'll just come out of that room with a nonchalant face as if nothing had happened.”

“Un... it'd be nice if it worked out like that.”

However even at his reassurance, Mizuki was still gripped in anxiety. She was also quite uneasy about being summoned to another world. She could see her feelings reflected in Suimei like a mirror. Reiji was feeling that he may have in fact been wrong to not consult the two of them and make a decision on his own just like Suimei had said...

“It looks like everyone is here now, let us begin. Reiji-sama, are you ready?”

While Reiji was deep in thought about the choice he had made, Titania had asked him if they could start after confirming the Court Mages were all present.

“Yeah, I'm ready whenever.”

“I apologize for making you wait so long because of our circumstances.”

“It was no problem.”

“If Reiji-sama says so.”

Titania replied to Reiji with a smile. Reiji didn't feel like he had been waiting all that long, but the other party was being quite polite about it. It may just be a part of her personality. Even though she was royalty, he did not sense an ounce of arrogance from her. As Reiji was thinking of this, Titania turned around with grace.

“Very well, Reiji-sama, I shall introduce you to the Court Mages who will be teaching you magic.”

“First, White Flame-dono... My apologies, Lord Stingray.”

Maybe because she was so accustomed to calling Felmenia by her second name, she had to correct herself. Felmenia took a step forwards from the line of Court Mages and took a respectful bow towards Reiji.

“We have been previously introduced to each other before, but once again I am called Felmenia Stingray. I may be the youngest among the Court Mages of Astel, but I look forward to working with you.”

“Likewise I look forward to working with you.”

Reiji returned her courtesy in kind. The first to be introduced by Titania was the mage who had summoned them to this world in the first place, Felmenia Stingray. She had beautiful, long, silver hair and named herself as the youngest among the Court Mages. Despite this she gave off an air of composure which gave a slight glimpse of her wisdom. Titania was extremely beautiful, however Felmenia was in no way inferior in this regard. She also had quite a well pronounced chest. Reiji made a noticeable swallowing sound.

“... To the left is Lord Malfous, Lord Kran, and...”

“Eh?”

Reiji had been entranced by Felmenia's figure and did not notice that the introductions were continuing. Titania had noticed that Reiji suddenly made a strange sound.

“Umm, Reiji-Sama, is something the matter.”

“N-no, it's...”

“It couldn't be that you aren't feeling..?”

“I-I'm alright. There's nothing wrong at all, hahaha...”

Reiji gave off a forced laugh to try and change the topic. There's no way he could admit that he was staring at Felmenia.

“Is that right? Well we have finished with the introductions... Now that I remember there was a certain matter that I must inquire about Reiji-sama.”

Titania seemed to have suddenly remembered something as she turned towards Reiji and began speaking as she opened the palm of her hand.

“Ummm, if I remember correctly magic does not exist in the world Reiji-sama and Mizuki-sama came from...”

“Yeah, it's the truth. Instead our world had developed the power of science.”

Magic did not exist. In their world this was a matter of course. As expected this was a surprising matter to this world. However what Reiji had said was also surprising as the crowd began to murmur.

“What is science?”

“I've never heard that word before.”

Felmenia made a dubious expression and pressed Reiji on to explain further.

“... Excuse me for cutting in, however Hero-dono, is that really true?”

“...? Eeeh, it's a fact... Is there something wrong?”

“No... I was just a little interested... I shall ask one more time, is that truly not a lie?”

As Felmenia was asking for confirmation once more, one of the Court Mages

present cleared his throat out audibly. He then spoke with a voice filled with disdain.

“Lord Stingray. Aren't you being quite rude to the man who is tasked with saving this world?”

“... My apologies.”

Felmenia bowed and apologized to her colleague's reprimand, but she still had a scowl on her face. Was something bothering her? Reiji had no idea what was on her mind. Instead, Mizuki turned to Felmenia and provided further explanation.

“The concept of magic exists in our world, but only as part of literary fiction. Unfortunately it is not something that exists in reality.”

Yes, it didn't exist. It was something confined to the realm of fiction. It was something created by authors to make their stories more interesting. Titania was also puzzled by Felmenia's insistence and turned to her.

“White Flame-dono, is something the matter?”

“No... it was nothing. I apologize for bringing this conversation off track.”

“Is that so? If you say it is alright then I don't mind...”

As Titania tilted her head to the side, an attendant standing by her side whispered something in her ears. This was probably to urge her to move onto the main topic. Titania once again began to speak.

“Well it is about time that we begin. This will essentially be the first time that Reiji-sama will witness magic. I was thinking that we could begin by having someone make a simple explanation while demonstrating their magic. Is this alright? So...”

Before Titania could finish speaking the haughty mage who had reprimanded Felmenia earlier took a step forward with an air of arrogance. It was the man that Titania had earlier referred to as Lord Kran. He had a slim figure and long hair. He had a mean look in his eyes and a very gloomy countenance. He walked forwards while playing with his bangs until he had come before Reiji and company. It seemed that he was volunteering himself to the task at hand.

“Well then, it is somewhat presumptuous of me but I would like to teach the basics of magic to Hero-dono.”

“... You will?”

“It is precisely as I say, your Highness.”

To Titania's confusion, the Court Mage gave his reply with a shameless look. His words were courteous, but his self satisfied look somehow made Reiji feel somewhat anxious. However at this point, Titania turned towards Felmenia.

“I personally feel that White Flame-dono would be the most suitable teacher... What do you think?”

Titania's statement shocked both the haughty Court Mage and Felmenia.

“Ha!?”

“... Is it alright for me to do it?”

“Yes. I feel it is only appropriate for you as the strongest mage in all the kingdom to do so.”

“S-strongest in the kingdom...”

Titania gave her recommendation with confidence. Felmenia was deeply touched with the grand evaluation that she had just received, however the Court Mage who had stepped forwards began to voice his objection.

“E-excuse me for humbly stating my opinion, but I believe I am more well suited to teach magic to Hero-dono than White Flame-dono.”

It seems he was unable to accept Titania's opinion. It was somewhat understandable. His role was being taken by a girl young enough to be his daughter after all. Felmenia rebuked him.

“Are you saying that I am lacking as a mage compared to you?”

“White Flame-dono. Though I may not appear as such, I am still a teacher at the Mage's Guild. When it comes to the instruction of magic, I have confidence in my own abilities. Since you are so young I do believe I am far more experienced in this field.”

At those words, Felmenia made a displeased face, but quickly turned it around

into a bold smile.

“Hoo... Then would you like to put that to the test?”

“If that is your wish.”

The atmosphere in the air had taken a very serious turn. One could almost imagine invisible sparks shooting out between Felmenia and the Court Mage.

“Eh? Eh? Is it a fight? Are they going to fight?”

“I can't say for sure if it is going to be a fight, but it does seem like something is about to begin.”

At the sudden turn of events at a time that they were supposed to be taking lessons, Reiji tried to calm down Mizuki who had started to panic. Titania seemed to have no intention of stopping the conflict. She seemed intent on just letting things play out. Reiji had thought that she was a kind girl, but it seems she had quite the stubborn streak as well.

“Is it alright then? We shall decide this winner based on the quality of your instructions in magic.”

As Titania explained the rules of the bout, the two mages took their positions. And...

“—Oh Earth! Gather and transform into a great power and crush my opponent! Rock Ridge!”

The haughty Court Mage was the first to open his mouth. He began chanting a spell that seemed straight out of a game. Mizuki began crying out “He's chanting! It's a spell!” in an excited voice. Rocks had begun to gather in the air around the mage and formed into sharp peaks.

“Amaaaazing!!”

“— !!”

Mizuki had jumped and raised her hands in excitement. Reiji was also surprised at her sudden shout of joy. As the Court Mage finished his magic with a satisfied look, he began his explanation.

“... Hero-dono. This is what we call magic. It is a great manifestation of power that uses mana to appeal to the elements which compose the world. If you picture the earth in your mind, surely you would also...”

“How abstract.”

“What?”

Felmenia interrupted his proud explanation with a scoff. To this the Court Mage gave her a mean scowl.

“I said your explanation is too abstract. It may pass off as an explanation for people from this world, however Hero-dono has come from a world where magic does not even exist you know? How do you expect to teach them when you do not even explain the concepts of mana and the elements?”

“T-that is...”

“It's fine for you to simply observe.”

Felmenia made this statement in a cold voice and began her own chant.

“—Oh Flame. Thou art endowed with the flame of justice, but disconnected from the flame of logic. Burn everything to ashes, the white calamity of truth! Truth Flare!”

Felmenia had started weaving together her spell. As Reiji witnessed this, he felt an intense heat welling up inside of him as if he had just recalled something.

(Ah...)

It was a heat coming from right below his navel. It was as if he was resonating with her chant. Energy had started to well up inside of him.



“... Hero-dono. The power of the elements, is the power of all creation. It is the source of all worldly phenomena. The heat one feels from flame. The kind and cold sensation one feels from water. If one is able to recall these sensations, then they would be able to borrow the power of these elements. As for mana, it is an overflowing, almighty sensation from within yourself. If you can recall that sensation, that should be all you need.”

“Wha...”

Mizuki gazed on in astonishment. It was only natural, as Felmenia had finished her spell, a bright white fire the same colour as her robes had surrounded her. These brilliant white flames then moved to surround the rocks summoned by the Court Mage and reduced them to cinders in an instant. It was as if Felmenia was brushing off a minor nuisance like it was nothing.

“Fuu. It seems your magic is all talk...”

“Wha, wha, wha, wha!?”

“A-Amazing Reiji-kun! The white flame went like buuu and then exploded like bo-bo-bo-bo-booom!”

“Aah, I saw.”

Mizuki was so excited she started to yell like a child. Reiji did agree with her excitement as he watched the embers of the white flame still present on the ground. After a while Mizuki had finally managed to calm down, and then suddenly expressed her admiration in a simple tone.

“So that's real magic...”

It was real magic. It was exactly how they imagined it would be. And then the Court Mage began to make his move. Even after having his magic completely overwhelmed he seemed to have any intent of giving up. But Felmenia had also predicted this would happen.

“—Oh White Flame! Gather into a whirlpool! Tornado Flare!”

As Felmenia finished her spell, the white flames that were still present on the ground suddenly burst into much larger flames and began to surround the Court Mage like a tornado. He had no time to prepare any sort of countermeasure. In an instant his entire surrounding was drowned in a brilliant

white flame.

“And that's the end.”

The Court Mage let out a groan at Felmenia's proclamation of victory.

“Tch... Even if you have defeated me when it comes to the strength of magic...”

He had been completely overwhelmed by her magic. But just as he had claimed, the point of the contest was their ability to teach, which was not directly related to their strength in magic. At these words all faces turned towards Titania.

“As expected of White Flame-dono. On top of her magic power, she has no shortcomings when it comes to the instruction of Reiji-sama who has come from another world.”

“But, your Highness...”

At these words of judgment, Felmenia gave a severe gaze to the Court Mage.

“You don't know when to give up do you? If you are also one of the proud Court Mages, you should gracefully accept your defeat here.”

“Wha-what are you...”

“Stand down. Or are you saying that you are unsatisfied with my judgment?”

Titania frankly displayed her displeasure with his conduct. At her strict orders, the Court Mage could only stutter out a couple of groans before his face had completely turned into a deep red colour. Finally he mumbled out “All is as you will.” and stood down. It seems that courting the displeasure of royalty was definitely something he could not do. Felmenia turned to Reiji with a face filled with confidence.

“Well then, Hero-dono. I who excels at the use of magic the most within this kingdom shall instruct you in the ways of magic.”

“Yes, Felmenia-sensei.”

“S-sensei?”

“Aah, from here on Felmenia-san will be my teacher. I felt it was only appropriate to refer to use as such.”

“However Hero-dono, you are the man who will shoulder the fate of the world. Also my age is not all the different from your own. Wouldn't calling me Sensei

be strange?”

“No, this is simply my own ideology. I may be a hero but I would never use that to put myself on a pedestal above others. As you are the one who will be instructing me in magic from this point on, it is only natural that I treat you with the utmost respect. I only ask that you allow me to refer to you in such a way.

Of course if it is not to your liking then I will stop.”

“... I see. If Hero-dono says so then I have no reason to object. If it makes you feel better, then please go ahead.”

“Thank you very much, Sensei.”

As he had received her consent, Reiji gave his thanks with a brilliant smile. Felmenia was still somewhat uncomfortable with the phrasing, but after seeing his reaction she nodded with a satisfied expression.

“U-un. Then are you ready Hero-dono?”

“From here on, I look forward to your instruction.”

Felmenia turned around as Reiji said this and started mumbling to herself with great joy without allowing anyone to see her expression or hear her voice.

(Sensei... I am a teacher. The teacher for the Hero... Fufufu)

As Felmenia managed to come back to her senses, Titania urged them to begin.

“White Flame-dono. I leave this to you.”

“Yes. Then first off. Hero-dono. I'd like you to imagine the feeling you had when you had witnessed my magic and concentrate on it. It should be appropriate to do so on the palm of your hand. If you do this, even without any spells you should be able to manifest something simple.”

“Is that really all it takes?”

“No, it isn't like it will work right away. It's probable that you will have to rework the image in your mind a few times. It takes a while for anyone to do so at first.”

Reiji obediently nodded at Felmenia's instructions. At any rate, he had to just try it. He began to recall the strange energy building up within him as he witnessed Felmenia's magic.

“Reiji-kun, do your best!”

Mizuki cheered Reiji on as he took a step forwards.

(I can do it. It's alright.)

Reiji slowly closed his eyes. He assumed that the sensation he had felt in his navel was mana and began to concentrating as he opened the palm of his hand.

“That's the way. Now find the source of a pulse which is coming from somewhere other than your heart..”

(A pulse which originates from somewhere other than the heart... here?)

As Reiji followed Felmenia's instructions, he had been fully concentrated on his own body and had found what she was describing. It felt like a rhythmic beat coming from somewhere other than his heart. As expected it was the point below his navel where he had felt energy gathering earlier. It was the same place often referred to as the centre of Ki in oriental medicine.

“Once you've found it the rest should be simple. Focus on the hot flow coming from the source of the pulse and direct it towards your palm... it is easier said than done at least.”

It seems she was assuming that Reiji could not do it. It was proof of just how hard they had all worked to understand magic. This was the true dividing point where Reiji would find out whether or not he could become a mage.

(No, I can definitely do it...)

Reiji was confident of this fact. He could already distinctly identify the source of power. That sensation which moved him so much earlier was the image of flames. Unlike Felmenia's, it was a fire which burned a bright red... In that instant, words popped up into Reiji's head like some sort of divine revelation.

“—Oh Flame, manifest before me! Flare!”

As if he was commanding his rage, he hailed forth the elements. Within the palm of Reiji's hand, a brilliant red flame was flickering in the wind. It was a

magic flame born of his mana. At Reiji's will, the flame suddenly disappeared.

“I did it...”

Passionate words began to fill the training grounds as they witnessed Reiji accomplish the impossible feat of invoking magic in a single attempt.

“T-that was his first time!?”

“As expected of the hero!”

Felmenia spoke in a simple tone.

“Magnificent... Hero-dono is a genius.”

Titania followed up after her.

“Congratulations Hero-sama. With this, you have become a mage.”

“I am, a mage...”

Reiji was feeling a flood of emotions at Titania's words. She then turned to Felmenia.

“As expected of White Flame-dono. Your instructions must also have been excellent.”

“No, my contribution was insignificant. This is a result of Hero-dono's tremendous power.”

“That's not true. Hero-sama who had come from a world without magic was immediately able to use magic. His talent was definitely there from the beginning, but it was your instructions that were able to bring them out. Your explanation from the earlier magic battle was also wonderful.”

“Thank you very much.”

Felmenia gave a respectful bow at those words. She was trembling in joy at these words of praise. Mizuki then approached Felmenia and began speaking to her in a timid voice.

“U-Ummm...”

“Is something the matter? Mizuki-dono.”

Mizuki took in a deep breath as if to dispel all of her nervousness and spoke the words that she had been holding back all this time to Felmenia.

“W-will you also teach me magic!? I also want to learn magic!”

“Is that alright with you? Then...”

And thus, another mage was born to the world.



Chapter 2 - The Place I Must Return to is so Far Away

Two weeks had passed since Suimei and company were summoned to this world to defeat the Demon Lord. The day that Reiji would depart to take part in the subjugation was soon approaching. These two weeks had been used entirely for preparation. Using previous hero summonings as an example, two weeks was judged as sufficient time for the hero to become accustomed to his newfound powers. During this time Reiji had been receiving training in both magic and combat. It seems that both himself and Mizuki were being strictly trained by the Captain of Astel's Imperial Knights as well as the Court Mage Felmenia to prepare them for the forthcoming battles. It was a hard schedule which crammed an unreasonable amount of training into such a small amount of time. As they hadn't raised any complaints about it to Suimei, he could only assume that it was progressing smoothly.

(Haa...)

As Suimei recalled the scene of the two of them training from his window and the reports he had been receiving from Reiji and Mizuki twice a day, he let out a sigh. He could only give out a sigh in grief. Reiji was just a normal person back in their own world. Of course when it came to combat training he was easily knocked down. He had never once studied any sort of martial arts, it couldn't be helped... However that only applied to the first day. He had become accustomed to fighting at a terrifying rate. After three days he was already able to bring out a serious fight from the Knight Captain. He was also already able to win quite easily against multiple opponents at the same time.

Suimei could only describe this as cruel. Normally one would describe it as amazing, but to Suimei this accumulation of power was just cruel. He did not know whether it was a result of the divine protection from the hero summoning or simply that he was favoured by magic. But the rate that Reiji was absorbing knowledge and experience was simply terrifying. To put it metaphorically, a sponge could absorb water, but Reiji was acting more like a pump. He wasn't just absorbing the water known as talent, he was sucking it up without mercy.

After seeing that scene, it was like all the hard work Suimei had dedicated all his life to improving himself was being denied.

(That's definitely cheating...)

This terrifying growth also applied to magic. In the other world, from the moment Suimei began touching upon the mysteries of magic, it was a whole two years before it started to take any sort of concrete shape. Reiji had accomplished the same in a single day. On that very first day, Reiji had manifested fire in the air before him. Suimei could only lose heart after witnessing such a feat. The world was truly an unfair place.

As Reiji was steadily receiving his training as a hero, Suimei was shut into his room at all times. Even though he never left, it wasn't like he wasn't doing anything at all. While sealing himself in the room, he had been accumulating knowledge about the world from books. Suimei recalled that day in King Almadios' audience chamber where he was told he would not be able to go home. At the time he had completely snapped and started to rant and rave, this memory was still fresh in his head. Because of this ridiculous turn of events, Suimei was forced to become a resident of this world. To that end, Suimei had spent the last two weeks acquiring the necessary knowledge to live in this world from the books he found in the castle archives.

From now on he had to live in this world. It's just how it was. Even if he meaninglessly struggled against adapting to this new world, it would just cause

more troubles from here on out. Luckily, perhaps as an effect of the hero summoning, Suimei was not only able to understand the speech of this world, but also the writing. Because of this, he did not need to rely on anyone to read the books he had found. Suimei was memorizing what he needed to about the world, anything important he would store in his bag. He arranged it all within his magically bound notebook. After two weeks, he had accumulated quite a considerable amount of knowledge.

However, it was still not enough. It is true that he had gathered quite a lot of knowledge. However this was all knowledge that was written in books. There was far too little written about daily life. And then there was magic... To Suimei grimoires were something that were not meant to be seen.

“Well then, setting that aside...”

Right now, what he had to do was right before him... Suimei was currently standing inside a gloomy stone room. This was not just any room. It was a room without a single piece of furniture. It did not house a single item that would support human life in any way. On the ground was a massive magic circle. Needless to say, this was the summoning circle. In other words, this was the place they had suddenly found themselves upon arriving to this world. The room used for the hero summoning ritual. As for the reason why a shut-in was standing in such a place.

“ ... ”

Suimei was silently analyzing the magic circle beneath his feet. This was the connection between his world and this one. It was also the primary culprit for mixing them all up in this in the first place. The source of the summoning magic. According to what King Almadios had said in the audience chamber,

the people here were unable to send the targets of their summoning – in this case Suimei and his friends – back to their point of origin. This was because to them, this magic circle and the summoning magic itself were basically out of place artifacts. They did not fundamentally understand the mechanisms behind it.

This could only be seen as a great nuisance to anyone summoned in such a way... Well this part was inevitable, but if there wasn't anyone in this world who knows a technique to return and Suimei wanted to return, he had no choice but to discover the technique himself. He would do so no matter what. The reason he was standing there, was to quickly analyze as much as he could about the summoning circle.

“Now then... The analysis of this ritual should only take a little longer.”

Suimei had come to inspect the ritual site multiple times already. For those two weeks, he had been sneaking out at any chance he could find to come to this room secretly. The analysis was turning out to be quite troublesome. Normally, analysis of magic would begin by investigating the root of the magic. It would begin with the theoretical analysis. However there was too little information about this summoning magic. All information about the magic was under strict control to prevent its practical application. It seemed difficult to even be able to grasp the roots of the magic itself. Suimei thus concluded it would be faster to analyze the ritual site itself.

“Well, let's start...”

Suimei had mumbled to himself, and began invoking his analysis magic.

“... Correspondence.” (Correspondence of All Creation)

As Suimei finished his spell, another magic circle began to rise out of the summoning circle. The circle was glowing with a faint cerulean glow of mana. Suimei began his analysis. The technique he was using was completely unknown to this world. As they would not be able understand his magic or its source, there was no way to protect themselves from it. The inverted triangle in the centre and the geometric figures around it were meant to control and then liberate the target... The smaller circles served as relays...



After finishing his business at the ritual site, Suimei quietly began returning to his room. He wasn't being sneaky, just quiet. As he returned on the path that he came from, Suimei mumbled to himself.

“... But really, to think I wouldn't be discovered by a single person along the way. I wonder if it is just a result of how safe this place is...”

Just as he had said, from his room to the ritual site and back, Suimei had not been discovered by anyone. He had been concealing his presence using Astrology Magic. The people along the way and the guards could not notice him at all. Even a fellow who looked like a Court Mage he had passed by did not react at all when Suimei tried giving him a greeting.

“Hmmm.”

Suimei folded his arms while walking and let out a groan. It seemed that they had no detection magic here. To Suimei it only seemed like they were ill-prepared. It was possible that this castle simply did not house any mages of

notable ability. None of this really mattered to Suimei anyways. As he finished up his thoughts, he continued walking to his destination. However, he stumbled upon an unexpected obstacle.

“Oh?”

Suimei had let out a completely unintelligible sound from his mouth. Perhaps because he had been deep in thought while walking, he had found himself in a completely unfamiliar passageway. Just which way did he have to go to return to his room? Suimei memorized the route to the summoning ritual site, but did not have the entire layout of the castle memorized.

(Uwaaa... I'm an idiot.)

Suimei brought his hand to his forehead and turned his head to the ceiling. This was just such a simple mistake to make, Suimei could only demean himself. Though since it has happened it couldn't be helped.

“... Oh well. I guess I'll have to find someone and ask the way.”

Suimei dispelled his magic and began looking people. If he just explained he was lost, he was sure someone would point the way. After walking down the hall for a brief moment, Suimei chanced upon someone immediately in a stroke of good luck. He approached the white robed figure from behind and addressed them.

“Um, excuse me.”

The figure came to a stop and gracefully turned around.

“What's wr... this is... Suimei-dono.”

“Hm? Aaah, if I recall you were...”

“I am called Felmenia Stingray.”

“Aaah.”

It was a voice and figure that he recognized. The girl standing before him introducing herself in an elegant manner was the mage responsible for summoning him to this world. The silver-haired Court Mage Felmenia Stingray. Felmenia knit her brows in a scowl and inquired into Suimei's actions.

“Why is Suimei-dono here?”

This was an obvious question. He was not hanging around Reiji so why was he just wandering around? It was a natural suspicion to hold.

“Ehh... I was just taking a brief stroll for a change of pace.”

“I see. I think it is a good idea to have a change of pace, but you are still unfamiliar with the castle. If you are going to walk around it would be wise to find someone to show you the way.”

“Thank you for the warning.”

Even though they were about the same age, perhaps because of her position as a Court Mage, the girl's manner of speech was somewhat formal. In a sense it was quite cool. Suimei followed up in a similar manner.

“Well, on top of receiving the warning, it is somewhat inexcusable but could you introduce me to someone who knows the way back to my room?”

“... Have you forgotten the way back?”

“Yes, though it is quite disgraceful.”

“... I understand. I know where your rooms are located. I have other business to attend to but I could guide you partway there. If that is alright with you then please follow me.”

“Sorry for troubling you.”

As Suimei gave a polite bow, he followed after Felmenia. If she was hanging around here at this time, it means that Reiji and Mizuki's magic instruction had ended. She was probably going to make a report to the King. As Suimei was pondering about such things, she suddenly came to a stop. She then turned around and asked Suimei in a quiet voice.

“Suimei-dono, is it alright if I ask you something?”

“What is it?”

Suimei was wondering just what was bothering this girl all of a sudden. Perhaps she was going to interrogate him about the magic he had prepared during the summoning ritual? As long as she held her suspicions, this was a

definite possibility. While Suimei was thinking about this dangerous development, Felmenia asked him in a stern voice.

“Suimei-dono. Why is it that you refused to take part in the subjugation of the Demon Lord?”

“Even if you ask me why...”

“Hero-dono is your friend is he not? Then why did you not make an offer to cooperate with him? In your position I feel it was something that you ought to do.”

Even though they were summoned at the convenience of the people of this world, it was a condescending way of imposing what his duty ought to be. To those who called them over it may be a splendid ideal to uphold, but to those who were summoned it was only something to piss them off. If they were to discuss this at length it would just never end, so Suimei decided to try cutting the entire conversation bluntly.

“... In that regard, it is just as I had explained before his Majesty the King in the audience chamber. I refuse to have anything to do with something so dangerous. Therefore I decided not to go along.”

At such a blunt statement, Felmenia's expression became ever more stern.

“Even though Mizuki-dono is a woman, she decided to go along.”

“I have no intention of just getting carried away in the mood of things.”

“... You're saying that Mizuki-dono was carried away by the mood?”

“Didn't she? At that time, there was nothing else she could say.”

Suimei had completely dropped his formal speech at this point. At that time, similar to Reiji, Mizuki had the problems of this world dumped onto her without a chance to thoroughly grasp the entire situation. She was forced to give an answer without having a chance for the three of them to discuss the matter privately. At Suimei's sudden change in speech without even an ounce of an apology, Felmenia, who had been acting quite courteously to this point suddenly changed her mood. She followed up in a cold voice.

“.... Fu... What a despicable man.”

“Ah?”

In response to this, Suimei let out a sound like he was picking a fight. At Felmenia's sudden scornful words, he had started to become irritated. Ignoring this, Felmenia continued to demean Suimei in a voice full of contempt.

“I said that you're a despicable man, you damned coward. Do you think you're clever for judging the bravery of your friends after they had mustered up all their courage? A bastard like you has no qualifications to name himself as the friend of the hero.”

“... Putting aside qualifications, I believe refusing is the much more natural response is it not? We were suddenly called into an unfamiliar place and told to fight you know? Normally anyone would make the same reaction.”

There weren't many people who would just nod and accept it if they were suddenly told to fight. The number of people who would refuse would far outnumber them, it should be no different in this world. Felmenia seemed to not

care about this fact at all.

“Even though you were summoned as part of a hero summoning?”

“So what? I didn't come here to do anything for you lot. You just decided to arbitrarily call us over. On top of that you wrapped us up in an accident. Aren't I the victim here? I don't know what kind of lofty ideals you hold towards your hero summoning, but I have no duty or debt towards you lot.”

As Suimei thrust this truth before Felmenia, she made a difficult expression as she seemed to recognize some of his points as valid.

“... I understand what you are saying.”

“This isn't that fine?”

“However, Suimei Yakagi. Are you not being dishonourable towards Hero-dono and Mizuki-dono?”

“Mu...”

Suimei could not raise an objection to Felmenia's point. He was not the only victim. He had no reason to show any sincerity to those who called him here, however just as she said, his own choice was ungrateful towards the other two. They were bound to be thrown into critical situations from this point on, but Suimei had still chosen his path which was still a complete secret to them. He had no reason to lie or make excuses about this point.

“... That's right. Certainly it is just as you say. I have for my own convenience, decided not to walk alongside them. I am completely lacking in virtue.”

“Even though you understand this you still refuse to join them you bastard?
You're a thoroughly helpless man after all.”

At Suimei's acknowledgement of his own shortcoming, Felmenia only got angrier. When it came to matters of morality, it seemed that this girl was quite the pure soul. However...

(Mu... this girl.)

To Suimei, Felmenia's anger was somewhat surprising. Surely it made him angry to be called thoroughly helpless, but she was saying this only because she had been thinking of Reiji and Mizuki. She was probably angered after seeing just how hard Reiji and Mizuki were working to take on the task they had accepted. While thinking of such things, even though he generally had a poor impression of her up until now, Suimei came to the conclusion that she was a pretty good person after all... But Suimei had no intention of speaking about this. Suimei shrugged his shoulders and responded to Felmenia frivolously.

“Yeah, yeah. Sorry 'bout that.”

“You bastard!”

Suimei's insolent behaviour only angered Felmenia further and she was scowling at Suimei. Not only that but she began to accumulate quite a bit of mana within her.

“...Oioi, what the hell are you trying to start in this kind of place?”

The passageway they had been occupying had suddenly turned into a whirlpool of danger. Suimei gave an astonished face as he raised his hands above his head without taking his eyes off the enraged Felmenia. Suimei was being sure not to be negligent. Felmenia began to fluently weave together her spell.

“Shut up. I, the White Flame Felmenia will beat your foolish nature out of you, you bastard!”

“No, why did it come to this?”

“Why don't you try asking your own heart!?”

“Even if you say something like that...”

Suimei let out a baffled groan at Felmenia's reckless anger. She was getting far too fired up on her own. He himself had absolutely no intent in picking a fight here. Suimei's nonchalant attitude which didn't even seem to pay any attention to her was just getting more and more on Felmenia's nerves as she continued to speak.

“You bastard... Are you even listening to me!?”

“I can hear you even if you don't yell. If you continue to yell like that you'll start bothering people you know?”

“M-my apologies... Or not! You bastard! listen seriously when people talk to you...”

“My my... shouldn't you calm down a bit... Hm?”

Suimei scratched his head as he said this to the enraged Felmenia in an exasperated voice. If things were to progress at this pace, a fight scene was pretty much inevitable. Suimei had suddenly noticed something. Within his line of sight he could see the flat of Felmenia's feet that had somehow gotten caught in the hem of her robes.

“O, oi wait a second. If you keep going you'll...”

Fall. Quite dramatically. She would magnificently face plant while tripping on her robe. Suimei saw a brief glimpse of this future event.

“What!? What will happen to me!?”

“No, if you keep going it'll be dangerous, your feet...”

“You bastard! Do you think that I will fall for such a petty trick!? Don't mock me!”

“I'm not mocking you, or rather calm down already, seriously. Ah...”

And after all that, it was actually quite sad. Engulfed in her anger, Felmenia had completely ignored Suimei's warning. And just as expected, she began to fall over.

“Hm!? Kya!?”

With her boots and the hem of her robes completely entangled she had tried to take a step forward. Felmenia had begun to fall over magnificently face first towards the ground. Not only was she falling over dramatically, while falling

she somehow managed to flip most of her robe over in front of her face. It was as if someone was behind her trying to flip up her skirt for a view, but using her entire robe. There was no such person there obviously.

“Wha!? What did you do bastard!? The robe, the robe is...”

As she got up slightly, the robe had wrapped completely around her. Felmenia was no longer able to see anything.

“Haaa... I've just been standing here. I haven't done anything.”

“What!?... Huh? Eh?”

The more she moved around, the more entangled around her the robe became.

To think it was possible to accomplish such a feat alone, in a sense this girl was quite skillful. Suimei had been waiting for her to get up herself, but contrary to his expectation he started to hear a tearful voice.

“It won't come off, why won't it come off...?”

“God... I guess it can't be helped...”

With a slight blush on his face, Suimei extended a helping hand. Felmenia's underwear and voluminous butt were on full display. He could only feel pity towards her as Felmenia wriggled around helplessly. As one would expect there's no way he could just leave a girl in this kind of state. She wasn't exactly a bad person so Suimei had moved to fix her robe. Suimei tried not to stare at Felmenia's underwear as he fixed her robe around her and pulled her up gently.

“Fuhhyaaa!? Wha-wha-wha-what are you doing!?”

“That's enough of that, just calm down already... HUUUP”

Suimei didn't pay any mind to her protests. After he stood her up, he started to straighten out her dishevelled robes.

“Heeh...”

“So, are you okay?”

Felmenia was making a stupefied face and staring off into the distance and did not respond to Suimei's question. Not only that she had dirt on her face from when she fell over, it was a very unladylike face. She had been quite hostile towards him, but Suimei did feel somewhat sorry for her. He took out his handkerchief from his pocket and began to wipe off the dirt from Felmenia's cheeks.

(My god, how troublesome...)

And finally, Felmenia reacted.

“A... U....?”

Felmenia didn't seem to know what was going on and began shifting her eyes

around, and then.

“A, AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!”

She let out a scream.

“Uwaa, what is it now...?”

Suimei jumped back at Felmenia's sudden scream. Felmenia began to glare at Suimei with a bright red face.

“Wha-wha-wha-what the hell are you doing you bastard!?”

“What am I doing? You know without asking don't you?”

“Not that! Not that, um, ah.... why were you doing such a thing?”

“Hm? Because I thought I should give you a hand obviously.”

“I-I didn't necessarily need any help! Actually, I was just about to harm you you know!? Even my face...”

“This and that are different matters. It was a waste of your cute face. I'll at least wipe the dirt off.”

“...!?”

Suimei had made this statement quite casually. Felmenia had suddenly straightened her back like a rod in an instant and stiffened considerably.

“Hm? What's wrong?”

“C-cute...”

“...?”

“Very cute...”

“Oooooi, what's wrong?”

Felmenia had departed into her own little world and Suimei had begun waving his hand in front of her face. When she finally came back to her senses...

“Eh? A-Aaaaaah!? Th-th-th-th-that's enough! I have business to take care of so you'll have to excuse me here!”

Felmenia's face was many shades of red brighter than it was before. Her face could be compared to an apple or tomato at that point. She began to run away quite quickly and came to a sudden stop after running for some distance. She then turned around vigorously.

“W-what I said earlier, I-I-I-I'll take it back!”

“Ha?”

“About your damned foolishness! A-a-a-a-also! Your damn room is at the end of this hallway after the bend... I-if you still can't find it just grab someone as ask them! Rather, remember this Suimei Yakagi! I'll repay this humiliation a million times over! Never forget! Absolutely never forget... Fugiiii!?”

Felmenia had come to a stop, but while yelling she had been flailing her arms around. Thanks to all these movements, she suddenly lunged forwards like a fish caught by a hook... and fell over right on her face once more. It seems this was her signature move.

“Just what the hell...?”

Suimei muttered to himself as he watched Felmenia unsteadily get back up to her feet and dash off at full speed. Between the Felmenia who was stuttering and screaming as she fell over and the girl who had just been coolly reprimanding him about his morality there was quite a large gap. The image in Suimei's head of Felmenia Stingray had crumbled spectacularly. Within his mind, Suimei re-categorized Felmenia under the clumsy character column.

“... Whatever, it's about time I go.”

Suimei returned to searching for his room.



He had stumbled into unexpected trouble, but Suimei had finally safely reached his room. However he did not yet have time to take a break.

“Mu...”

Suimei noticed footsteps and the presence of mana approaching his room. Even though he had just been involved in some trouble, to everyone else Suimei had just been holed up in his room this whole time. Suimei turned his attention to the door. It was very likely that he was about to receive a visitor. The footsteps were approaching his room without any hesitation, what's more this magic signature was familiar. One of the visitors was definitely Reiji, who had been growing strong at an exponential rate, as for the two others... One would be the one who had originally asked Reiji to save the world, Titania, who stuck to Reiji around the clock. Sticking even closer to Reiji all the time in reaction to this new companion, the other one was Mizuki.

Having identified his soon to be visitors, Suimei gathered all his books and magic tools on his desk and without leaving any evidence, hid them all using magic. Ever since that day in the audience chamber, Suimei had locked himself in his room and never left. This was at least the impression he wanted others to have. Just earlier Felmenia was also under this impression, needless to say Reiji and company were also convinced this was the case. The less he interacted with other, the less likely it was that his identity would be exposed. With this in mind, Suimei had cut off his interactions with people entirely except for the few people where he could not. This way his identity as a magician would be easier to hide.

Of course, all his meals were brought to he room. The only times he had left the room was to check up on Reiji, to visit the castle archives, to analyze the summoning ritual site and to go to the bathroom. This was an obvious choice to hide his identity as a magician. If he was discovered, he would be surrounded by people who would want to use his powers. Suimei was also still against revealing this fact to Reiji and Mizuki. This way he also had way more free time, and could gather intelligence as much he needed to.

On the other hand, the impression the people of the castle had of him had only dropped. After refusing to cooperate with the hero Reiji to go and defeat the Demon Lord and throwing a fit in the audience chamber, aside from the King

and Titania, everyone in the castle had started to whisper foul rumours about him. To Suimei this was actually a beneficial cover for his actions so he didn't really mind at all, in fact it would be more appropriate to say that he would welcome more of it. Thinking this Suimei crawled under the sheets of his bed. Just as he had gotten in position, a knock resounded throughout the room as Reiji had arrived at the door and began speaking.

“Morning Suimei. Are you awake?”

“... Ahh, come on in.”

“I'm coming in then.”

“Excuse me.”

As Reiji and company stepped into his room, Suimei sat up from his bed. As usual, after grabbing several chairs and sitting down, Suimei asked Reiji the same question he always did.

“So? What happened today?”

“Eh? S-somehow this is more sudden than usual, Suimei.”

“You usually have this angry expression on your face, did something happen to calm you down?”

“Ahaha, you can tell?”

“Of course.”

Suimei nodded to Reiji who was laughing to hide his embarrassment. From the moment he had stepped into the room, Suimei had recognized that Reiji was in a different state of mind. His smile notwithstanding, he just had a much

calmer air about him. It was like something good and something weird both had happened to him and mixed together as a single sensation. Reiji put on a brave smile and started explaining.

“Today I learned physical enhancement magic. Wanna see?”

“Oh? Let's see it.”

This was the source of Reiji's good mood. He was simply happy that he managed to learn a new magic spell. In this respect he and Suimei were quite similar. That first time a new magic took form and came together was definitely an intoxicating feeling for him. Reiji started to stretch his limbs and warm up his body. For physical enhancement magic, it was important to do this to prevent one's body from breaking apart from the additional stress.

“Here I go.”

As he said this, Reiji began to spread his mana across his entire body. He had constructed the spell in the blink of an eye and activated the magic without any chanting.

“Burn Boost!”

As Reiji spoke these key words, flames burst forth from his body and began wrapping around him. As a result of the magic, Reiji's physical abilities were boosted. Right now his body which was already enhanced as a result of the hero summoning was even further enhanced.

“Ooooh!!”

At the sight of the degree of completion of Reiji's magic, the magician Yakagi Suimei unintentionally let out a voice of admiration. The activation of his magic was quite splendid. From the amount of mana used, to the construction of the magic and finally the invocation using a single phrase, it could only be summed up as splendid. Certainly it was still possible to simplify the magic and create the same effect with less effort, but for someone who had only begun touching upon magic two weeks ago he was a perfect example of a strong foundation. Praising him was only natural in that case.

This magic seemed to use fire as an attribute, on top of physically enhancing the body Suimei was certain it also granted explosive increase in strength. In the case wind was used it would increase the body's speed. Water would increase the fluidity of motion. Earth would harden the body... Suimei had simply analyzed the effect of physical enhancement techniques using all the different elemental attributes from seeing Reiji's example once. Titania had been staring at Reiji as if enraptured and drew nearer to him.

“As expected, you're magnificent Reiji-sama...”

“Ahaha, thank you Tia.”

Reiji returned Titania's cheerful smile with words of gratitude. It seemed he was also referring to her by her nickname. Suimei wondered just when the two of them had gotten so close. Mizuki started to pout a bit as she looked at Titania.

“Hey Tia, aren't you a little too close?”

“It's alright isn't it Mizuki? Mizuki is usually the one who is close, you should yield some of it to me.”

“Eh, no, I'm not always that close!”

“That isn't the case. Mizuki is always unnecessarily close to Reiji-sama. It's unfair.”

They had originally been talking about Reiji's physical enhancement magic but had managed to suddenly turn it into a heated argument between the two on a totally different topic. Suimei was getting sick of this scenery.

“Real-fags should explode... I mean, that magic is quite cool Reiji.”

“Eh? Yeah! Isn't it!? This magic is easy to use to, I quite like it.”

“Ahh, it looks good. It may also be unexpectedly intimidating...”

Suimei gave his honest opinion. First and foremost the magic definitely looked good. To be wrapped in fire like a dragon, it was quite cool. Just by having a cool effect it was also enough to deliver some impact on his opponents' mental state. It was an unexpectedly important matter. Mizuki then turned towards Reiji, instead of Suimei for some reason, and spoke up.

“I-I'm also able to do it now!”

“That's right. Mizuki is also trying her best huh.”

“Eh? Well, yeah...”

As Suimei praised her, Mizuki surprisingly replied with a flushed face.

Thanks to her little quarrel with Titania, Mizuki had only been looking at Reiji. She was certainly planning to have Reiji praise her in opposition to Titania. Suimei who was able to observe all this from the side looked at Reiji half with the intent to just kill him and half with a pleasant smile.

“Kukuku...”

“W-what is it Suimei-kun?”

“Nothing really, good luck.”

“Yeah! I won't lose!”

If one were to listen to her proclamation, one might guess that she was referring to the Demon Lord. This however, was definitely not what she meant. As Suimei was thinking of such things, he changed the topic.

“And, anything else?”

“Eh? Well various things happened...”

Reiji gave a vague reply. Suimei could tell that something had happened. It must have been something strange.

“What's the matter Reiji-sama?”

“Eh? No, um....”

“Did something strange happen Princess?”

“No? Rather than strange, I would say that Reiji-sama's greatness has further

increased.”

The big foreheaded girl Titania reported this with a smile on her face. From her expression Suimei did not feel like she was lying. So why was Reiji trying to brush off what had happened?

“So, what exactly happened?”

“T-that's... Umm...”

Reiji was trying to avoid this topic of conversation but it seemed Titania was more than happy to talk about it. She began to speak as if she was boasting about herself with great pride.

“Yes. Today, all the specialists of each field from the Mage's Guild within the Kingdom of Astel gathered to have magic contests with Reiji-sama.”

“Hmmm~ the Mage's Guild huh?

Suimei had yet to investigate them much. However from what he could recall they were the organization that most mage's in the country joined.

“Yes. At our request for their cooperation, everyone had gathered today for this purpose.”

“Is it rare for all of them to gather?”

“It is. Everyone of them are busy dignitaries. Normally they would be actively working everywhere within our territory.”

It must have been quite troublesome gathering them all at once. However saying all the specialists from each field was a strange turn of phrase to Suimei, so he asked Titania for clarification.

“By the way what do you mean by specialists of each field?”

“Fire, Water, Wind, Earth, Lightning, Wood, Light, Darkness. They are the most outstanding mages from these eight attributes. Among them there are some who surpass even our Court Mages in ability, everyone of them had been given the name of Emperor within their field. For example the utmost specialist of the Fire attribute would be referred to as the Flame Emperor.”

“...”

Suimei had wondered whether this was really okay. The word emperor was supposed to have a much grander significance. In Japan it was only used for a single person standing atop the entire country. Maybe it was a result of the translation from this language to Japanese. No matter how you put it, it still left Suimei with a sense of discomfort.

“Suimei-sama, is something the matter?”

“Ah, no it's nothing. So what was the result of the contest?”

“Of course, Reiji-sama won.”

Titania puffed out her chest in pride as if it was her accomplishment. She then said something that Suimei could definitely not let go.

“On that occasion, Reiji-sama was given a second name by the master of the Mage's Guild.”

“A second name?”

A second name. This was something given to acknowledge one's strength and accomplishments. It was a great honour which identified their greatest feature. It was definitely a fantasy setting. Reiji seemed somewhat stiff as the topic came up, and tried to change the topic.

“I-isn't it fine not to say it?”

Mizuki had barely managed to stifle her laughter at Reiji's amusing behavior.

“Fufu...”

“What's wrong Mizuki?”

“Uun. It's nothing. Please continue.”

“Hmm? So Princess. What's the second name that Reiji received from the Guild Master?”

“Suimei that's...”

“The second name that Reiji-sam received from the guild master is, the miracle user of all attributes... The Supreme Ruler of All Attributes!!”

Titania had made this vigorous proclamation as she thrust her fist into the air. For an instant, everybody in the room was frozen solid. And naturally, Suimei was no longer to hold any of it in and burst into laughter.

“Fufuhaha!!”

“Eh...? Suimei-sama!?”

“A-all attributes, it's... ha, Supreme Ruler she said... Haha. Crap, Nope, I can't, ha, ah, AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!”

Titania was surprised by Suimei's sudden fit of laughter. She started to glance around the room. Reiji, who had been sitting beside her, had hidden his face in his hands and was shaking his head. Mizuki was making an envious expression as this kind of talk was basically gourmet food for her. She was looking at Reiji while blushing. After Suimei had been laughing continuously for some time, Reiji began speaking as if he was pouting.

“... See? That's why I didn't want you to say it.”

“...? Why is it? To a mage the appointment of a second name is the greatest honour, so why is Suimei-sama...?”

Titania was completely befuddled by Suimei's reaction. It seems the standard for 'cool' differed between their worlds. Mizuki was simply an exception to the norm. Reiji had understood this, which is why he had wanted to avoid this topic of conversation.

“But it's the Supreme Ruler of All Attributes! The Supreme Ruler of All Attributes she said!? Fufuuu! What's wrong with the Guild Master to give out a second name like that!? Crap, it just has no sense! Not even an ounce of it! Ah, my stomach! Fuha... HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!”

“... Suimei I'm begging you, just drop it.”

Reiji was pleading with a disheartened voice. On this day, this topic kept them going right to the end.



One day, the Court Mage Felmenia Stingray was headed towards the hero Reiji and his friend Mizuki Anou to teach them magic.

“To think I would become the hero's teacher...”

Felmenia was talking to herself as she walked down the hallway. Her heart was a jumbled mess, she was just filled with joy. This was because among the dozen or so Court Mages, Felmenia – the youngest among all of them – had been appointed to teach magic to the man who was meant to save the world. In other words, she was the teacher of the hero. For a mage of this world, there was indeed no higher honour. At this thought, Felmenia was no longer able to stifle her laughter.

“Fu, fufufu...”

She normally carried herself gracefully and beautifully. But just at that moment she was putting on quite the slovenly smile. Even after she had noticed that she was leaking out a creepy laugh, she was unable to stop. She was truly glad that people did not often come to this hallway. A mage was meant to always be dignified, but her current behaviour was in direct opposition to this. There would be nothing more embarrassing for her than to be found like this.

Felmenia had never expected that she would be teaching magic to the hero. She had always thought that the hero would be taught by the strongest swordsmen and mages brought over from across the world. It meant that she was judged to be on the same plane as these grand masters.

In Reiji's world, magic did not exist. It was an added complication to instructing the hero in magic. On the day of the summoning ritual, the day they had first arrived to Camellia Castle, they had all shown astonished expressions when they had witnessed the large door to the audience chamber open by magic. Felmenia remembered this well. Just like the day she had first witnessed magic, they had sparkles in their eyes as they gazed upon it. When she inquired how civilization had advanced without any magic in their world, Reiji explained that instead of magic, they harnessed the power of science. An art which crafted mechanisms of steel and lightning to develop the world. It was an interesting story no matter how much she heard of it. As she was reminiscing of such conversations, Felmenia chanced upon something unexpected...

“... That's, Suimei Yakagi?”

As Felmenia was hurriedly headed towards her grand duty of teaching the hero, she had spotted the figure of the hero Reiji's friend, Suimei Yakagi, in the hallway... Suimei Yakagi. Despite being the hero Reiji's friend, he was a remarkably mediocre man. He had neatly arranged black hair and a gentle gaze. Aside from this he had no distinguishing features. He was the sort of existence that could be found absolutely anywhere. Standing beside Reiji who could only be described as an amazing prodigy, it was easy to completely forget Suimei's existence. Felmenia had gotten into a quarrel with him earlier, so she had recognized him as someone she should not let her guard down around.

(But that's...)

That was wrong. Despite having thrown a tantrum in anger, having lost all control of her emotions and having made a terribly embarrassing blunder, he was a kind person. He wasn't a terrible person like all the rumours about his refusal to participate in the Demon Lord's subjugation would suggest. Also...

“Cute, right...?”

Felmenia was remembering the words Suimei had spoken at that time. Just how long has it been since someone had called her such? No matter how much she tried to recall, the only instance that came to mind was when she was a small child. As she recalled such things, her face had started to flush with heat.

“N-n-n-n-no, what am I thinking about!? Just from that I'm not particularly happy...”

However she was unable to finish her sentence. It was true that the gentle boy's words and actions had moved her. It was precisely because he was in fact this sort of person that she came to a new conclusion.

“I should at least go and apologize...”

When last they met he said he had been out to take a stroll. Perhaps this was to go and meet his friends. They did not get many chances to meet since arriving to this world after all. It was only proper that she admit to him that she had said too much and to offer a word of apology. Even if they are not able to get along well after this, she at least wanted to remove any ill feelings between

them. Having made her decision, Felmenia headed towards Suimei as straight as an arrow. As she came around the bend at the end of the hallway...

“Eh...?”

He was nowhere to be found. To this completely unexpected betrayal of her expectations, she could sense that something was wrong. This was the north wing of Camellia castle. The kitchen, bathroom and the hero Reiji would not be in this section of the castle. The only thing that could be found by going in this direction of the ritual chamber. It's not a place that one would normally head towards, just why was he walking towards it?

(... But wait a moment. If I remember correctly, ever since the incident in the audience chamber, I heard that Suimei-dono had always shut himself up in the room appointed to him...)

Felmenia had closed her eyes and was deep in thought making a severe expression. She had not interacted with him at all after the incident, so she was not very well informed about him. But it was certain that the people of the castle had said that ever since Suimei refused to accompany the hero, he had sealed himself in his room. If he ever came out, it was only to use the bathroom or to check up on his friends. There was also that one time he was out to take a stroll too. The reason for this was likely that he had become frightened upon coming to an unfamiliar land. And like a child he had begun to sulk while locked in his own room. From the people who informed her of his situation, this was what they had all conjectured. The word coward was also thrown in here and there.

“If that's the case, just why...?”

Why was he in a such a place? The north wing of the castle rarely had any visitors. Felmenia raised her head at this mystery which had peaked her interest. And after some consideration...

“There's still some time until Hero-dono's lessons are meant to begin. I don't have any other business in the meantime. So I have some free time right now. Let's follow him...”

Felmenia headed down the path that Suimei disappeared into as she convinced herself. Of course this wasn't a simple matter of curiosity. Nor was it simply her wanting to give him an apology. This was because she was also an employee of this castle. On top of that she had her responsibilities as a Court Mage. If Suimei was holding a grudge for the summoning and scheming to take some sort of revenge, she had to stop him. Felmenia was hoping that this was not the case.

(But...)

That wasn't everything. This boy, Suimei Yakagi, was trying to do something while keeping it a secret from everyone else. It was her duty as a Court Mage to find out what.

(... That's right. On the day we had greeted them. Suimei-dono was certainly...)

At that time, he had prepared some sort of magic. In the middle of the summoning circle in this north wing, he had been concealing his right hand. As

the doors to the ritual room used only for the purpose of summoning heroes, among the three people there only he was controlling his mana. He had readied some sort of magic to deploy. The only one to notice was Felmenia. Even though she was royalty, Titania had great talent as a mage. And even she had not noticed at all. However the magic he had prepared was dispersed quickly. From that point on Suimei had acted the same as his two friends. But this did not mean that Felmenia was wrong. That was definitely the act of a mage. There was no way that this was just her imagination or a misunderstanding.

Reiji and Mizuki had confirmed that magic did not exist in their world. In its stead was an existence known as science. It was a world dominated by grand technological advancements. The nights could be made as bright as daytime. They had many buildings far taller than even this Camellia Castle all lined up in rows. They had even managed to place humanity on the moon. It was a world where they lived far more affluent lives than Felmenia's world could ever imagine.

It did not seem that Reiji had been lying. There was not an ounce of dishonesty in his straightforward gaze. There was absolutely no doubt in his words. Then just why was it that only Suimei was able to use magic? Why was it that his friends were also unaware of this fact? While Felmenia was walking and pondering about this information, she managed to catch another glimpse of Suimei's back. She had finally caught up to him. It seemed that Suimei had not noticed her yet. He was simply walking forwards without paying any attention to his surroundings. As he came around another bend, Felmenia hurriedly chased after him and followed the bend, but...

“... Hm!?”

“Kya!?”

Felmenia had collided into somebody and a scream could be heard. After

she regained her posture and straightened herself out, standing there was one of the castle's servants, a maid. The source of the scream was this girl.

“My apologies. Are you hurt?”

“N-No! I must also apologize! More importantly, have you hurt your face Stingray-sama...?”

“Eh? N-no, my face is fine?”

“T-then are you hurt somewhere else!? Aah! What do I do!?”

“No, I am not injured anywhere. While we're at it I do not have even a speck of dust or dirt on me.”

Felmenia was confused. From just a light bump the maid was raising an awfully large fuss. There wasn't anybody in the castle who would punish someone for such a thing. Felmenia gave the maid a gentle smile. Seeing this, the maid took a deep breath and gave an expression of relief.

“Is that so... Thank goodness...”

“My apologies.”

“Y-Yes...!”

“Umu.”

Felmenia gave the maid a dignified nod. She was not acting like a lady from the court, but imitating the behaviour of the wise sage who had taught her magic. It was an attitude that, even though she was quite young, did not give an impression that she should be underestimated. The maid seemed to be enraptured by this sight. When she noticed that she was just standing there

staring at Felmenia, she bowed down with all her might.

“I-I'm very sorry!”

“It is fine, I don't mind.”

At those words, the maid gave another bow and started to walk off. However Felmenia had remembered something and called back out to her.

“... Sorry, do you mind if I ask you something?”

“Eh? Ah, yes. What is the matter?”

“Just before bumping into me I believe you passed by another person. Do you know where he headed off to?”

“... Huh? Before meeting Stingray-sama I had not met a single person...”

“What did you say!?”

Felmenia had suddenly raised her voice in a way that she would not normally do. She could not overlook the words that the maid had just spoken.

“U-Um. Did I say something wrong...?”

“I will ask you once more. Did you really not meet a single person?”

“Y-yes.”

“You're not lying?”

“Yes. I swear to the Goddess Alshuna that everything I have spoken of to Stingray-sama is the truth.”

Faced with Felmenia's threatening attitude, the maid had claimed that she was telling the truth. She went as far as to swear upon the goddess worshipped by the Salvation Church, the one true God Alshuna. But this was strange. There was absolutely no way that they had not passed each other. While pondering over just what could have happened, Felmenia once again spoke to the maid.

“... There's no way that you did not meet anybody. Right before I came around this corner, Suimei-dono... Hero-dono's friend had should have also just came around this corner.”

“Hero-sama's friend? But I didn't...”

The maid was restlessly looking around around as she had no idea what was going on. She wasn't alone in this regard.

“Just what could have...?”

“U-um Stingray-sama. I need to be in the south wing so... Um...”

“A-Ah. My apologies. Sorry for stopping you for such a strange thing.”

“It's alright, then please excuse me.”

The maid gave one more reserved bow and walked off.

“ ... ”

As Felmenia saw the maid off, she made a frown as she could not figure out what was going on. Just what had happened? She was definite that Suimei had been just ahead of her, but he had completely disappeared after turning the corner.

(... I still have time. I'll just have to dive in deeper.)

Felmenia decided to head further into the north wing. It was just as the maid had said, there was nobody here. Felmenia had arrived at the deepest part of the north wing, the summoning ritual room. As she arrived, Felmenia came across something that could definitely not be overlooked.

(Wha...!?)

It was impossible. Felmenia could not believe just what was before her eyes. This room was a special room whose entry was only permitted in extreme emergencies. She was told this by the other Court Mages. However right before her, the door to the sacred ritual room was ajar. The higher authorities had banned all entry into this room. A special magic was used to tightly seal the door. Without the magic used to dissolve the seal, it was a door that could absolutely never be opened. However right before her, Felmenia was looking at evidence that the door had been opened.

The only ones who knew how to dissolve the door's seal was his Majesty the King and the Court Mages. Felmenia took a large gulp as she erased her presence and approached the door. She was almost bound in place by the tension. Just what could be inside? From the current flow of events should could take a guess, but she still could not help but to tense up as she came up to

the door.

As she peeked through the small crack in the open door was... A pure white notebook that could not be found in all of Astel, a thin cylindrical glass tube and the man holding onto these items while staring at the summoning circle, Suimei Yakagi. He was mumbling something to himself while completely focused on his notebook and cylindrical tube.

(As I thought...)

It seems that Suimei had used some magic trick to open the door. Felmenia found this surprising, but this was the reality that she was currently facing. This was full-fledged evidence that he was in fact a mage.

(However... What should I do? Is it alright to just throw him out?)

Felmenia was wracking her brain as she had suddenly found herself between a rock and a hard place. This was a restricted area. Normally it was expected to immediately call out to him and either hand him over to security or deal with him herself. However this was the hero's friend, on top of that a mage. Even though he was a mage, Felmenia had absolute confidence that she could subdue him. The bigger problem was the fact that he was the hero's friend. If this turned into a big uproar, it could change the mood of the hero and he may decide not to participate in the Demon Lord's subjugation after all. This would be a serious affair to both Astel and the whole world. This was not something that she could decide on her own.

(But just what is that man doing? No... It's likely he is investigating the

summoning circle...)

Looking at him from the perspective of a mage, his actions were mysterious. It looked like he was investigating the summoning circle, but he was just walking around randomly over the summoning circle while staring at his notebook and tube. To analyze a magic circle, it was normal to do so by standing outside of the circle and observing how the circle was drawn. Only then could one expose the technique. What Suimei was doing had no resemblance to what normally analyzing a magic circle should look like. To Felmenia, it looked like a commoner who didn't know magic who somehow stumbled into learning magic just trying things at random and hoping something would stick. At any rate, this magic circle was something whose construction and use were passed down from generation to generation. There wasn't a single person in the world up to this point who could analyze how it worked...

Felmenia could only stare in silence at Suimei's mysterious actions on the summoning circle just up until the time for her lessons with the hero.



The same night, Felmenia had a visitor to her room in Camellia Castle.

“... Wha? Is that story the truth?”

To this question, the Court Mage Felmenia gave her affirmation without a doubt in her mind.

“Yes. It is just as I described.”

“...”

They did not sense an lies among Felmenia's words and began to ruminate on her words with closed eyes. Just a while ago, she had come forward with something that must be heard and they met in Felmenia's office, which also served as her room. Her visitor was another Court Mage. According to her story, Felmenia had witnessed the friend of the hero Reiji, Suimei Yakagi, walking around all sorts of places within Camellia Castle freely. She had been struck with the anxiety of dealing with this man who may be scheming something, but also having to deal with the fact that he was the hero's friend. At a loss at what to do, she decided to consult her fellow Court Mage about the issue at hand.

“Do you not believe me?”

“That is not the case. To be honest I have also witnessed that man wandering around every once in a while.”

“Ooh? Is that indeed true?”

“Aah, and today as well.”

“Then it is settled. If Suimei-dono was scheming something...”

Her colleague made a face that seemed to imply Suimei was definitely scheming something, however Felmenia shook her head.

“No, we do not know for sure yet. Without having investigated further it is too hasty to decide that he is scheming something.”

Certainly Suimei's behaviour was strange. It was strange, but Felmenia had only seen him coming to and from the ritual room. Just this act did warrant a certain level of suspicion, but it also wasn't enough to condemn him. The Court Mage then suddenly came to an agreement with Felmenia.

“You are correct. Such wisdom, as one would expect of the one called White Flame.”

“Ah, yes...”

It was good that they came to an agreement, but Felmenia was embarrassed by the flattery.

“I understand the situation. I will also begin investigating the matter.”

“Thank you very much.”

“Well then, if you will excuse me.”

The Court Mage left and shut the door to Felmenia's room. As she thought about the current chain of events, Felmenia mumbled to herself.

“Suimei-dono, just what are you doing...?”

There was nobody present to give her an answer.



“... Something concerning the hero Reiji's friend...?”

A few days after Felmenia discovered Suimei's mysterious actions, she was now standing in Camellia Castle's audience chamber before his Majesty the King. The reason for this was obviously because of Suimei. Since that day, Felmenia had been snooping around every single detail of Suimei's movements. She had now come before his Majesty the King to report her findings. At the King's puzzled expression, Felmenia gave a nod while still kneeling down.

“Ha. That is exactly the case.”

“Is this about Mizuki Anou?”

“No, the one I would like to make a report about is his other friend, Suimei Yakagi.”

The King frowned and squinted his eyes at Felmenia's declaration.

“... I see. As far as I know that one has rarely left his room after the matter in this chamber. I haven't heard anybody saying that he has even left that room.”

“No, in truth Suimei-dono has been walking around the castle on countless occasions.

This was the conclusion that Felmenia had arrived at after investigating the matter. Whenever she had free time, Felmenia would snoop around Suimei's movements. She had thoroughly investigated just what he was doing in

Camellia Castle. What she discovered was that shutting himself in was a complete deception. It turned out that he was quite actively moving around. As she reported this to the King and appealed to him with here eyes, he replied in a grave a voice.

“I haven't heard this kind of report from anybody else.”

“He has been moving around in secret using the fact that he had shut himself in as a cover.”

“Without being spotted by a single person?”

“Ha. It is very likely that including myself, only a few people are aware of this fact.”

The King gave a deep frown at Felmenia's words.

“... However I do not understand. Why is it that only a few people are aware of this fact?”

“I had also been walking around and found him completely by chance. I conjecture that he is using some sort of magic to hide himself from the eyes of others.”

“You said magic? Did you teach it to him?”

“No, I didn't teach him anything.”

“...? What does that mean? Did another Court Mage teach him?”

“No, that is also not the case. I believe Suimei-dono was somehow already able able to use magic before coming here.”

As expected, the King made a confused look at these words.

“However, Felmenia, I heard that magic does not exist in Hero-dono's world? In its stead that world had developed using other techniques. Hero-dono had said that magic was simply a product of fiction.”

“That's correct. I had also asked him about this. However it is true that Suimeidono had used magic.”

“So Hero-dono was lying?”

“No, I did not get the impression at all.”

I did not exist. Reiji had great aptitude for magic, however he didn't have an ounce of knowledge regarding magic beforehand. The King also held faith in the fact that Reiji was not lying.

“... That's right. I also believe so. But... “

“But why is there such a discrepancy with Reiji-dono's words, right?

“Umu. Perhaps he is hiding the fact that he could personally use magic. But it is still strange that Hero-dono would be completely unaware of the existence of magic in his own world.”

Similar to Felmenia, the King was also stuck on this point as he tilted his head. Magic was a technology. In this world, it was something deeply intertwined with the lives of the people. It was not something that they could cut loose, an integral part of their lives. It was something that grew alongside the people since time immemorial. Then just how could anybody in this other world not be conscious of its existence? No matter how much the people relied on the completely different technology known as science, technology was technology.

As it followed completely different principles from science, the two would complement each other and push the development of mankind even further. Then just how could the hero Reiji make such a straightforward declaration?

“... Your Majesty. I believe Hero-dono's world must have some sort of complicated circumstances. However the important thing right now is...”

“Just what is that young man doing in secret in this castle, right?”

“Yes.”

“I have not imposed any restrictions on their movements ever since they arrived to this world. They were permitted to walk around the castle all they like. There shouldn't be any reason to move in secret...”

Suimei was also a guest of the castle, the same as the hero Reiji. The King had ordered that the three of them, Reiji, Mizuki and Suimei were all allowed to look around the castle as they pleased. The people of the castle were told to cooperate with them if need be. They had absolute freedom within the castle. This was a special consideration from the King himself. After giving it some consideration, the King spoke his verdict on Suimei's actions.

“... Even so, I don't believe there are any problems?”

“No, the problem is the places that Suimei-dono has been wandering into.”

“The places? Just where has he been?”

“First off the archives. He has taken several books from there to his room every day.”

“Hoo? I thought he had been shutting himself in, but to think he had been visiting the archives, I am quite impressed. Since he cannot return, surely he is accumulating knowledge about our world.”

As he heard that Suimei was entering the archives, the King made a surprised face, yet let out a voice of admiration. He nodded his head as he had come to the understanding that Suimei had no intention of losing to the absurdity of being summoned to his world by studying. He wasn't wrong, but there was more to Felmenia's report.

“No, there is also evidence that he has gone into the forbidden archives.”

“Wh-What did you say!? No, but that isn't the kind of place that can simply entered...”

The King was very surprised. The forbidden archives was not a place that could just be entered at whim. The archives stored many historical and important documents. Magic was used to prevent people from accessing them.

“And he did so easily.”

“My goodness... And, is that the only place that young man has wandered around?”

Felmenia paused briefly before shaking her head. She bit her lips at the gravity of the situation and continued.

“Suimei-dono has also entered the ritual site.”

“Impossible... The only ones who know how to dissolve that magic seal should only be myself and the Court Mages.”

“That's correct. However, I believe Suimei-dono had used some kind of trick to

open that door.”

At these words, silence drowned out the audience chamber. The ritual site was sealed in such a way that uninvolved parties would absolutely be unable to enter. The magic sealing the door used Earth as an attribute. Without a thorough understanding of this attribute, one could not even draw close to the door. This only solidified Suimei's abilities as a mage.

“Just what is he doing... is a foolish question. That young man was investigating the summoning circle was he not?”

“I did not look like that to me, but considering the circumstances that should be the case.”

“... Does he want to return that much...?”

The King mumbled with a hint of anguish in his voice. Calling the three of them over to this world hung heavily on the King's heart. He was a kind King who thought carefully about Suimei's state of mind. At the international conference, the King had been opposed to the summoning of heroes. He did not want to push such an outrageous responsibility onto unrelated parties.

Regardless of how much they would be showered in praise for their achievements, once called they could never be returned. On top of that, as they held such power, they would surely be involved in critical situations on a global scale from the moment they arrived, to the moment they died on these lands. No matter how much the King spoke of such matters, the fear the leaders of the all the world's nations held towards the Demon Lord were far too extreme to hear him properly. It was decided by majority that they would proceed with the hero summoning. These matters trampled on the King's noble heart.

“... So, Felmenia. Why have you not said anything up until now?”

“I had been investigating under my own discretion. I believed it would not be wise to create a big ordeal of the entire situation. If an uproar were to come about because of this and Reiji-dono heard of it...”

“Certainly, it is possible that discord between us could be born from such an event.”

“Yes. As for not informing you your Majesty, I had not yet gathered enough information to make a proper report.”

Felmenia had determined that insufficient information was dangerous in its own way. It could only lead to misunderstandings. This was the primary reason the Felmenia had been withholding her reports.

“Naturally, I assume you had planned to take action if anything were to happen?”

“Yes, naturally I was ready.”

This was a matter of course, it was because of this that Felmenia could follow around Suimei with confidence.

“Have you spoken of this to anyone else?”

“I have shared my suspicions with a few others. What I have shared with your Majesty I have only shared with a few colleagues. However I have kept this a secret from Reiji-dono and Mizuki-dono.”

“I understand. If that is the case than be sure not to speak of this matter to anybody else. I will inform the other Court Mages myself. Also be certain not to inform Hero-dono of this. Understood?”

“Ha.”

Felmenia gave a brief acknowledgement to the King's grave instructions. She did not quite understand the King's intent behind keeping all of this a secret, but she respected his wishes nonetheless.

“Your Majesty. What would you have me do about this matter?”

Felmenia was ready to take action against Suimei and asked the King for directions. To Felmenia, there was no way that he could be left to his own devices. Even if Suimei was the hero's friend. However the King returned her words with an unexpected frown.

“Hm? We will do nothing. Isn't it fine to leave it as it is? From your testimony it seems he isn't scheming any sort of trouble. There is no need to interfere. The young man is moving around behind close doors hoping nobody will interfere with him after all.”

“However, what about the case of the forbidden archives...?”

“Since he's already been inside it cannot be helped. The only things stored in there are historical books and maps. Even if he saw all its contents, there is nothing in there that would cause any problems.”

It was certainly as the King had said. If he carried away it all away to another nation it would be an entirely different matter. But there was too much of it for one person to steal. Felmenia understood this. However she still believed that this judgment was far too naive...

(But still, why would his Majesty not want to spread word of this?)

To naively let someone go who had been ignoring the laws could only be seen as a unjust. However if he kept the fact completely hidden nobody would know about it. Was this the reason the King wanted to keep it a secret? If he kept everyone who knew close by, then word of this would not be able to spread. The King had a righteous personality, he had lived that way since birth. Felmenia knew this much. This was why she could not understand the King's decision.

“... Then, will his Majesty not be taking up measures regarding this?”

“Do you disagree?”

“Suimei-dono is a mage. I believe we should take measures against him. It is true we must act in such a way that Reiji-dono would not take offence, however if we continue to allow him to do whatever he wants in Camellia it will affect his Majesty's good name. Also in the unlikely event that something were to happen...”

“... Personally, such a thing does not bother me in the least.”

The King did not seem to show any interest in Felmenia's proposal. The King seemed intent to bring this conversation to an end. However as a Court Mage she could not possibly step down at this point.

“Your Majesty. I believe a slight punishment... Yes, something akin to a punishment would be appropriate. I will not cause any harm to his body. If Suimei-dono speaks of it to Reiji-dono, then I will persuade Reiji-dono personally.”

“Hoo? You'll persuade him? You seem awfully confident.”

“I am still his teacher after all. As such he should not disrespect my words.”

Felmenia was convinced that she could convince Reiji in case of an emergency. She was the Court Mage in charge of teaching him magic after all. Reiji called her Sensei out of respect. If his friend was scheming something bad, then if she explained it to him she was sure that he would understand. There shouldn't be any problems. Therefore there was only one course of action she should be taking.

“All that is left is for his Majesty's approval. Please, grant me your permission.”

The King shut his eyes and after careful considerations, spoke his opinions in a grave and loud voice.

“... It cannot be allowed.”

“But! Your highness!”

“Felmenia. I said that it cannot be allowed. Like Hero-dono, Suimei-dono is an important guest of our castle. I will not allow any harm to befall him.”

“I'm not saying we should harm him! I'm only saying that we should take the appropriate measures against him for doing whatever he likes. I also do not believe Suimei-dono is scheming anything wrong but... However we should stop him before this becomes more serious than it already is... I believe this to be my duty...”

The King made an astonished face to Felmenia's determination even though he had already made his decision.

“You seem awfully fixated on this.”

“Eh!? Ah, no... that's... tha...”

“Is Suimei-dono on your mind that much? Felmenia.”

“N-no! I just, because of him he could cause problems to Reiji-dono, that's why...”

As her odd behaviour had been pointed out, Felmenia had become quite flustered but somehow managed to smooth it over. It was true that she was fixated on Suimei. The King reaffirmed his decision to Felmenia.

“What cannot be allowed cannot be allowed. Do you understand, Felmenia?”

“...”

“Your response?”

“Everything is as you will...”

Felmenia had no choice but to accept the King's decision. She could only bow down deeply while biting her lips with regret. Just how long has it been since things did not go her way. Immediately following her appointment as Court Mage, it had happened on a few occasions. But since then it has been a long time. The focus of her attention was a mage... No, it was precisely because of this fact that the situation was all the more vexing for Felmenia. The refusal from his Majesty the King had affected her greatly, but the focus of her anger was all pointed at Suimei.

Just why did she have to carry this burden? If Suimei just stayed in place

and kept quiet it would all be fine, but he just kept sneaking around. He was just piling on troubles one after the other. It was as if he was sneering at her. It is true that he was not a bad person. Felmenia understood this, but this was all the more reason that her anger could not subside.

(No, not yet...)

Even though the King had forbidden it, she could not possibly just sit idly by and accept it. This was the court. The King's court. Setting aside her personal feelings, as a single Court Mage she could not possibly ignore the actions of another mage who was doing whatever he wanted in that court. The time to act was now. At the current time there was still only a small number of people who knew of the situation. Suimei still did not know that his actions had been witnessed by others. While the situation was still not known to others, before anyone could find out, there was a possibility for her to close off the entire case.

(That's right. I'm a splendid Court Mage of Astel...)

Felmenia reminded herself of her position in her heart. The King's dignity and Camellia's order, these were things the ones called Court Mages were meant to protect. It's for this reason that Felmenia became a Court Mage. Therefore it was her responsibility to show that young man just what sort of place he has come to. She had no idea what magic and mages from the other world were like but she was sure to show him his place in society. After witnessing her grand magic, surely he would also become obedient. That's why...

(Just you wait Suimei Yakagi! I who have been bestowed the name of White Flame shall bring an end to your damn foolishness.)

There was no problem. Felmenia was a Court Mage, the one known as White Flame and the hero's teacher. As a mage who held all three of these honours she was a mage without parallel. She could stop this level of mage with ease. There was not an ounce of the defect known as negligence in Felmenia's decision.



“My my... Felmenia is still young...”

As Felmenia's figure disappeared behind the closed doors of the audience chamber, King Almadious let out a deep sigh. He could predict that she was definitely about to recklessly start something due to this abundance of youth. Her eyes had shown clearly that she had no intention of backing down at all. It was very likely that she was about to start something somewhere nobody would notice. It was inevitable. The King felt sorry for the young man who was about to be caught up in this storm, but it was also true that he was reaping what he sowed. To what Felmenia was about to do, the King began preparing an appropriate punishment.

“Being too talented is also difficult...”

Lately, Felmenia's self-conceit had been growing stronger. Did this conceit affect her sense of responsibility? It seems she was too strong for her own good. Once more, King Almadious let out a deep sigh.



“North wing, all clear... huh.”

The sound of a soldier's boot steadily tapping against the stone floor resounded throughout the north wing of Camellia Castle. A castle guard donning the equipment provided by the kingdom to all guards was walking out of a room where not even a single person was present, lit only by a single candle in his hand. He shut the door. This was the last room in the north wing. There was nothing out of the ordinary in the whole wing, which marked the end of the guard's patrol.

Making rounds of the castle every day was the duty currently appointed to this guard. Obviously his duty was not to patrol it during the day, but in the dead of the night while the whole castle was asleep. Camellia during the day differed greatly from Camellia at night. The light from the sun no longer lit the passageways through the windows. Even though it was so dark, to save costs all the candles were put out during the night. The guard only had the one candle to light his surroundings and the light from the moon. As these light sources only cast a faint glow to his surroundings, it was definitely a nerve wracking experience.

It was for these reasons that the job of patrolling the castle of night was one that nobody wanted to do. The absolute lack of light definitely left the castle with an ominous feeling. Since this was such a hated job, the senior guards often pushed this responsibility onto the younger ones. They often used the excuse that it was a good opportunity to memorize the layout of the castle.

“Haa... I just want this to end quickly...”

This guard was precisely one of the younger guards who had the responsibility pushed onto him. He was made to patrol the castle at night by high high-handed seniors after being given a bunch of absurd reasons... He could only complain that nothing could possibly happen. Just what kind of an idiot would attack the castle which currently housed the hero? Ever since the hero was summoned, security all over the castle had been strengthened.

However anybody who witnessed the hero's training would call such orders as being overprotective.

This young guard had chanced upon the hero's training once. It was truly terrifying. The hero Reiji was something all the guards both idolized and feared. He had fought the greatest knight in the Astel Kingdom on an even field. At this point he could even add in ten other knights and fight in a cool and composed manner. Instead of protecting him, it was he who should be protecting them. The guard was just hoping for an excuse to shirk his duties as he complained about his superiors, then...

“... Hm?”

The guard had clearly heard the sound of metal clashing resonating through the hallway behind him. He immediately turned around and raised his candle.

“Is somebody there?”

He raised his voice, but there was no reply. His candle did not illuminate a single figure. Down the hallway, just around the corner, there was only a single room. It was the rumoured room that the Court Mages only used when they performed a special ritual. The guard had already inspected the area. At that

time he did not find anything... However, unlike the previous days, there was a large suit of armour in front of the door.

“Harris, is that you? This isn't a very good joke you know?”

The guard called out to his colleague who also patrolled the castle at night to try and lighten his heart up. This specific hallway was known to be particularly creepy among all the guards. It was possible another guard was using this fact to play a prank and scare him. Or at least the guard was hoping that was the case. The guard wanted to run away and curl up into a ball and pretend that he had heard nothing... And once more, even louder than before, a large metal clang rung out throughout the hallway...

Cold sweat was now running down the guard's back. Was it an intruder? Surely even his colleagues wouldn't take the joke this far. He had no choice but to proceed forwards and find out what was happening. It was possible that this was a ploy by the demons who were aiming after the hero after all. The guard questioned just how anything could get past the magic tool prepared by the kingdom's greatest mage, the White Flame. Nonetheless, he drew his sword and approached the source of the sound steadily. In case of emergency he also had his whistle to call for help. Even if the worst happened to him he could notify the others. And then...

“... Huh. What the? There's nothing wrong here. Thank god I was overreacting.”

The guard's fears and anxieties were brought to an end. The only thing he found as he arrived was the large armour standing before the door. There was no intruder, and as expected there was no way a demon would be here. It was obvious. In the first place, the only one who would loiter around Camellia

Castle at this hour was the young man standing right before his eyes. Judging that he no longer needed his sword, the guard returned it to its sheath. It was his own fault for letting his guard down. He was tired from patrolling the castle every night and decided to just hurry back and go to sleep. The guard gave out a yawn at the sudden onset of drowsiness. The young man standing before him bid him goodnight with a smile while waving to him. At this event, he turned around and called it a night.



“Iyaaa risky, risky. That was close...”

Suimei was standing there waving bye-bye to the sleepy guard. As the guard vanished from his sight, he let out all of the breath he had been holding in. He did not expect that a guard would still be patrolling the castle. Suimei had assumed that nobody was left awake and had been negligent. This chance meeting was truly born of his own negligence. However, the one he chanced upon was neither a mage or a person of skill. He was just a commoner. He had immediately fallen under Suimei's spell, and returned quietly. Suimei had nothing more to worry about. After having a nice long rest, the guard will have forgotten about everything that happened. It was an unexpected event, however the cause of it all was the armour next to Suimei...

“My goodness, to think she would bring out an automaton. Even though there was nothing here up until now, just how much has that woman come to hate me...?”

Suimei gave a cold glance at the ornamental armour standing beside him. Was Suimei directing this cold gaze to the armour, or the woman behind its placement...? Automaton. Generally classified under alchemy. It was a

technique to manufacture golems. They were dolls made of wood or earth. This one was a set of armour imbued with magic made to imitate living beings. It was set so that when certain conditions were met it would take action and defend itself. In terms of the modern world, it was something similar to an android.

In Suimei's world, this originated from one of Hebrew's Kabbalah. It was a hidden technique that was well protected. Since they were in another world, the magic used here had no relation to that. Suimei tapped the armour lightly, and it fell to the ground as if it was completely disassembled. It became a simple heap of steel laying on the ground. Even though it made quite a lot of noise, there was nobody around anymore to hear it. Suimei let out another sigh. The first noise produced earlier was when the armour had suddenly attacked Suimei. The second noise was from when Suimei broke the armour.

(Still, this was very well made. It doesn't seem it was made recently, at least it wasn't made by someone who is still around here...)

But just where had they been keeping this relic? Suimei had sensed the danger before he even arrived, so he was fully prepared for the situation and dealt with it swiftly... But still, it was a very well made doll. As he had just experienced, this automaton was the type to react to the mana of any surrounding intruders, and then begin draining that very mana. It was built with both physical and magical defence in mind. Not only that it wielded a sword with a deadly amount of aggression... it was amazing, and thus cruel.

“... Seriously what the hell is that woman thinking? No matter how much I'm loitering around the castle as much as I want, for someone who isn't an enemy murder is going too far isn't it? Aren't you supposed to be a bundle of a responsibility and pride?”

Suimei was currently complaining about the Court Mage Felmenia while making a sour face. He was pissed. Even though they were both mages walking the same path, to calmly set up a trap that could have easily lead to his death was taking it too far. Just how much did she put into her pride in serving the court? It seemed like she was telling him that as long as he was trespassing in her garden, she would show him no mercy.

“Ah... Well. I get it. For magicians this much is natural... Right...? Yeah.”

Suimei was wondering just what sort of misunderstanding he was making. Even though this was another world, magicians were magicians. If someone was aiming for their research, and stepped into their den, it was only natural to respond with the intent to kill. Even though this was another world the same probably still applied. Though Suimei was not absolutely sure about this fact.

(Still, isn't this far too violent? Is this what it means to repay me a million times over?)

Suimei knit his brows together as he remembered their last encounter. He hadn't been expecting his gentlemanly behaviour to be paid back in such a way. She was definitely going for the kill here.

“... Well whatever. If she's going to come at me with that intent, it means I just need to respond in kind.”

As one would expect he could not just stand idly by after it has come this far. Suimei uttered those dangerous words while making a dark expression. This was not the expression of a young man, it was the expression of a magician

preparing for battle. Suimei then shifted his attention to the scraps of armour laying at his feet. It would be a problem to leave it like this. Suimei didn't particularly care if Felmenia discovered it, but if someone else chanced upon the scene it could create quite the uproar. Suimei didn't want more guards patrolling around after all.

“Well, let's do it...”

Suimei began constructing his magic with the minimum required amount of mana. A small, red magic circle formed and began to expand. Many numerals and characters were written on the magic circle. The circle revolved as it expanded and then came to a stop as it stabilized.

“Renovatio Redivivus” (Restoration and Reconstitution)

It was the most basic of fundamental restoration magic. The magic did not repair anything, it simply returned objects to their previous state. Two magic circles appeared under the automaton. They were both revolving as one of them began moving upwards. As if following the circle moving upwards, the armour was rebuilding itself. When the circle reached its peak, the automaton had completely returned to its previous state.

“... There we go. Neither good nor bad. Just the same as usual.”

As Suimei was praising himself for the smooth execution of magic that did exactly what it was meant to do, the automaton was once more standing up perfectly straight. It would not move anymore. The magic that was inscribed into the armour had been completely destroyed by Suimei. This had just become

a wreck in the shape of an automaton.



Leaving the wrecked automaton behind, Suimei entered the room it was guarding. He was already quite used to coming here. This was the one place other than the archives that Suimei frequented, the summoning ritual site. His goal was obvious, he was analyzing and deciphering the summoning circle present in this room so that he could derive a method to return back to his own world. Whenever Suimei was not reading books or sleeping, he was always here studying the summoning circle regardless of whether it was day or night.

Suimei wanted to return to his own world. No matter the cost. Suimei still had to finish the magical thesis that his father had entrusted to him. The quickest way to accomplish this was to gather research material, magic items and research results in his own world. Certainly given enough time it wasn't something that he could not accomplish in this world. However it was something he was not sure he could even accomplish before he died in his own world. Time was precious, it could not be wasted. That's why his highest priority at the time was returning to his own world. That was definitely a major factor but...

“I bet those two also want to go back...”

Suimei thought this as the light from his magic gently bounced off the stone walls. Suimei knew. Reiji would stare into the emptiness of the sky every now and then. Beyond that vast emptiness he must have been gazing at a vision of his lost home. He surely had lingering feeling to his loved ones that he could not even bid farewell to. Suimei knew. Mizuki would start crying when she was alone in her room. At the price of following behind the man she loved, she was

gripped with the fear of loneliness as she left behind everyone she knew.

Whenever Suimei thought about this, something would boil within his heart. He wasn't sure what it was, but could only describe it as hot. He did not want the last time they would be able to see their families to be the day before the royal audience. He didn't want them to suffer for the rest of their lives thinking of the people they could never meet again. As long as hope existed, Suimei would not give up. It was for this kind of reason, that Suimei accepted his father's wishes for him to become a magician. So that he had the power to fight against any unreasonable odds... He wanted to prove to the world, that he could save those who could not be saved. Just this one thought drove him forwards.

“... I can't go with them, but I'll also have to try my best.”

Suimei spoke these words so that he would not forget them. He had turned his determination into words. He would not accompany them on their journey, that's why without fail, when the time came he would present them with a choice. Thus he swore to himself. As if to pour cold water on his noble determination, Suimei sensed the presence of mana nearby. It was trying to skillfully hide itself, but it was without the doubt the presence of a human. No, it wasn't anything so vague to Suimei. It was the one known as White Flame, the Court Mage Felmenia Stingray.

Felmenia approached the room at her own pace and came to a stop before the automaton. After a while she began to peak into the room using the small crack Suimei had left open. Just how many times had she been tailing him up to this point? Suimei pretended not to notice and just left her to her own devices. She truly didn't get tired of repeating this action. After observing his actions for a while, she silently left on her own.

“Just a bit more until I reap the sowed seeds, is what they say? It's about time I begin thinking of the stage and timing...”

Suimei had had enough. He had to punish the one who was attentively sniffing around the stink of his ass. The other side was expecting to be the one to punish him after all. To turn it all around and see her surprised face, this would also be quite amusing.



A short while after Suimei had entered the deepest room of the north wing of King Almadious' Camellia Castle, Felmenia was standing before the door completely dumbfounded.

(This is... Just what...?)

Felmenia could only mutter these confused words to herself in her head. It should be natural. For anyone who understood just what the ornamental armour before her was, it was obvious. The armour standing before her had the formal name Slamas Armour. It was created by a mage who was known for his heroism throughout the long history of the kingdom of Astel. It was a mobile golem created by what is still called one of greatest spells throughout the entire nation. It was created using earth magic by a great sage who also largely contributed to the construction of Camellia Castle. This great sage had spent his entire life creating only one of these golems.

As for why this golem was currently standing in this place, it was obviously because Felmenia set it up there. She had brought it with the intent of stopping

the unknown mage Suimei Yakagi. After consulting with another Court Mage, using him as an intermediary, she had it brought here from the corner of the reliquary. She had predicted that Suimei would come here again and placed it in his path. She waited for the guard's patrol to be over before coming over herself, however the golem was still standing there as if nothing had happened.

In this case one would normally assume that Suimei had given up and left, but the door to the room had been left slightly ajar. Felmenia decided to test the function of the golem to be sure. However the greatest golem in the nation was already just a wreck in the shape of a golem.

(This is just too cruel for the golem's creator...)

Felmenia let out a dumbfounded mutter. She had previously verified that the golem was in fact activated and capable of moving on its own. It was impossible that it did not take action here. But if it did take action, the golem must have gotten into a fight with Suimei. However there wasn't a single trace of a fight having occurred in the surroundings. But that should be impossible. This golem was created first and foremost for defensive use. During the activation test Felmenia had served as its opponent, it wasn't a foe that could be stopped so easily.

So just how had the golem been destroyed so completely? The magic inscribed within the golem had been utterly annihilated. However the exterior was completely unharmed and it was standing exactly where she had left it. Just what kind of miracle could render the golem into such a cruel state? Even if one forcefully overpowered it, the exterior would at least be damaged. However there wasn't even a trace that magic had been used in the area. Felmenia could not understand at all just how the golem had been defeated. The culprit in question was inside the room with a light, glaring at the summoning circle as usual. It's as if he was completely ignoring Felmenia's actions like they meant nothing to him.

(Fuck...)

Felmenia became enraged at her own imagination. She spat out a vulgar word that she had never uttered since the day she was born. Felmenia was enraged that she, who was called a genius, who became a Court Mage faster than anybody else, the great Felmenia Stingray who climbed to the top was being completely treated like a speck of dust on the wall. She took great offence to this. She knew that he did not notice she was currently right there, however it still angered her. She could not forgive a magic trickster to underestimate a Court Mage. She couldn't forgive him for completely ignoring her considerations and doing whatever he wanted. The golem was destroyed because she had gone about it in an indirect manner. She had intended it to bring him to a checkmate and make him stop his actions on his own, but still he persisted.

“Suimei-dono... Tch.”

However she couldn't do anything to him here. Feeling dejected, Felmenia once again returned to her own room.



Felmenia was returning to her room late at night from the north wing once again. She went to reach her doorknob.

“Eh...?”

For some reason, she sensed a light presence of mana. Felmenia did not recall using any magic when she left. When she examined her room more closely, it seemed that it was just her imagination. There were no traces of any magic being used in the area. It was probably the remnants of mana that she unintentionally let out. To react to that sort of thing, she must have been getting tired. All of this was Suimei Yakagi's fault.

“Tch, now that I think about it...”

Someday, she'll teach him a lesson. As she was thinking such dangerous thoughts, Felmenia made preparations to retire for the night. However at that time.

“... I apologize for intruding so late at night. Lord Stingray, would you happen to be present?”

A courteous voice and knock came from the other side of the door. Felmenia recognized the voice. It was the Court Mage who had reported on Suimei's movement to her just the other day. She was preparing to retire for the night, but she couldn't just ignore him. Felmenia straightened back out her white robe, and invited the visitor in. The Court Mage opened the door and entered reservedly.

“Goodness, please excuse me.”

“What is your business with me today?”

Considering the time, Felmenia had no intention of just chatting. The Court Mage did not seem offended by Felmenia's frankness and responded.

“Yes. I had something that I must tell your Lordship with all haste...”

“Which is?”

“Naturally, about Suimei Yakagi's case.”

It should have been obvious that the only reason her colleague would come to her like this would be information regarding Suimei. It must have been something quite important for him to come with all haste however. There was also the case of the golem, so Felmenia braced herself and spoke.

“So, what has that man done?”

“That's, it's hard to say but...”

“Why is that?”

“I had only grasped this information myself recently, but it seems that man isn't only wandering around the castle. I believe he is plotting to bring harm to his Majesty the King.”

“What did you say!?”

Felmenia let out a loud yell of shock towards the Court Mage who hold just informed her of this news in a grave voice. She was shaken at the utterly outrageous news that she had just received, after thinking about it a bit she replied.

“... Ah, no. No matter how you look at it aren't you leaping to conclusions a little too much? First off Suimei-dono should have no reason to aim for the King.”

“Regarding that matter, I also share your opinion. However it seems Suimei-dono holds quite the grudge towards his Majesty the King. One of the castle maids I had eavesdrop on him had heard him saying things like 'Just you wait' and other curses directed towards the King while he was in his room.”

“Wha...”

“He's also been seen striking the furniture out of frustration. It seems he is quite troubled.”

Felmenia was unable to speak upon hearing the Court Mage's words. Certainly, what he was saying wasn't completely out of the question. Even if the hero summoning was a decision made at an international level, the responsibility still fell upon his Majesty the King who made the final decision for their own nation. Suimei had plenty of cause to hold a grudge towards his Majesty for this reason.

“There's more. We had placed several magic tools around the castle as a countermeasure to intruders. However a few of them have been broken. On top of that the broken ones were largely focused around his Majesty the King's chambers.”

After coming so far, these words were predictable. Still, Felmenia could not hide her nervousness.

“That's... As expected...”

“Yes. The traps had been placed during the day and Suimei was seen loitering in

their vicinity by a number of witnesses. Is this not definitive evidence?”

“Suimei-dono, you would go that far...?”

Felmenia hung her head down as she mumbled this. She was shocked. Setting aside the fact that he was wandering around, to think he would go as far as to plot such a crime. There was no need to think about it. Or there shouldn't have been. But as she recalled Suimei from that day, the image of Suimei within Felmenia only grew hazier.

“U...”

Felmenia's field of vision had started to narrow. She was dizzy. The worried face of her colleague looked like it was rippling on the surface of water. His face was growing more and more distorted.

“Is something the matter?”

“No, I'm just a little dizzy.”

“You must be tired. White Flame-dono is busy after all.”

“Haa... My apologies.”

At the lighthearted interchange between the two, Felmenia's dizziness began to subside. Was he worried about her? But Felmenia found this strange. It was only a short while ago that they had been in a fight. They were unable to come to terms at all at the time, a bad relationship. Was it something that time just fixed? Now they were talking as if nothing had happened between them. It seems they were not on as bad terms as she thought. More importantly, the

matter at hand was Suimei Yakagi. She could definitely not forgive that man. After all, he was planning to harm his Majesty the King. As her dizziness vanished, she clearly recalled this fact. As she made her determination, she spoke up.

“... Have you informed anybody else of this information?”

“No, I have only informed your Lordship.”

“Understood. Then please keep this a secret from the other Court Mages. We'll finish this before reporting to his Majesty the King.”

To Felmenia's request, the Court Mage gave a puzzled expression.

“Lord Stingray?”

“... I will settle this case. Leave everything regarding that man to me.”

Just as was the case after speaking with the King, Felmenia was intent on settling everything herself. It was precisely because few people knew of this information that she could settle it on her own.

“All is as you will. Then, I shall excuse myself here.”

“Thank you very much for coming out of your way.”

“It was nothing, well then.”

The Court Mage excused himself and left the room just as he did five days ago.

As her colleague left, Felmenia was no longer able to hold it in.

“To think he was that kind of man...”

As she spoke her thoughts, she once again began to boil with rage. To not only turn his back on his friends, he was also moving on his own to satisfy his own vengeance, to think he was a man of such vulgar nature. Not only that, his ill intentions were aimed at that compassionate king. Was the kindness he showed that day a simple fabrication? Was he a mage who could do something like that so easily? The more Felmenia thought about it the more it enraged her. She held nothing but disdain towards that vulgar mage.

“Tch...”

She was getting dizzy again. As her dizziness cleared, Felmenia's thinking had changed gears entirely.

“... To sneakily plot such things, a mage without a single fragment of dignity...”

It was as if she held such thoughts from the beginning. That was fine. She would punish him.

(If you won't reflect on your damned self and simply repeat your foolishness then just watch. I will definitely show you the abyss of magic that you do not understand.)

Within the heart of the young girl known as the White Flame, a dark flame had begun to stir. She had become obsessed with her fame and fortune. It was a flame brought out by those who lost their way and grew overconfident in their own abilities... At this time, within Felmenia, the sense of duty and responsibility that she held as her creed was defeated by her immense pride and conceit. She had lost all sight of what she should be doing. She was only concerned with the vision of the young man from another world burned into the back of her eyelids. As she could no longer hold back her anger towards this memory she spoke out to herself once more.

“... Suimei Yakagi. Be sure to say your final prayers and wait for me. I shall thoroughly demonstrate to your damned self the power of the one known as White Flame.”

There was no way for Felmenia to know that her resolve would soon turn into pure and utter despair.



... As Felmenia was steeling her dark determination, a voice full of contempt was let out in front of her room.

“Too easy...”

He let out a sneer towards the sound of Felmenia's voice filled with self-conceit from the other side of the door. The Court Mage who had just reported to Felmenia was standing in front of the door as if mocking it.

“And so, the seeds have been planted.”

As he said these words, he pulled his hood up over his head. The man that Felmenia had called a Court Mage disappeared into the darkness.

Chapter 3 - The One Who Seeks Mysteries

It has been a few days since the golem was destroyed. Felmenia was tailing a single young man in the dead of the night through Camellia Castle. This was the night she decided to secretly confront him. She was intent on punishing this man who was loitering around Camellia ignoring the King's authority. She was tailing behind him at a reasonable distance. Of course, just like always, Suimei had not noticed her. There was no way he could. Whenever Felmenia shadowed him, she used wind magic to conceal not only her footsteps, but even the sound of her breathing. It didn't matter who tried it, there was no way to detect her presence when she used such a magic.

Despite there not being a single light, the young man had been walking through the complete darkness without a single ounce of hesitation. It seemed that he was headed to a different location this time. As always, today he was also wearing the clothing from another world known as a 'blazer'. Felmenia still had no idea where he was headed. Regardless of the destination, she was prepared to reveal herself today and take the appropriate action.

“...!?”

Felmenia had noticed someones shadow being cast at her feet. At the sudden event, Felmenia made a quiet voice and turned around. She didn't think it was possible for anyone else to be up and about at this hour. Felmenia spent some time searching for the shadow, but did not find anyone. It seemed that she was just imagining things. In the dead of the night where even the plants were asleep, there was no way anybody other than the guards were walking around.

And, as Felmenia turned around to continue her pursuit...

“... He vanished?”

Suimei was no longer there. She had only taken her eyes off of him briefly, but he had suddenly disappeared. This was an absolute mystery to Felmenia. At the pace that he was walking at he should not have reached the end of the corridor. However she could not see him at all. However it did not matter to Felmenia that she could not see him. If she could not see him, she just had to find him. Thinking this, Felmenia began to gather her mana and weave her wind magic.

“—Oh Wind. Thou art my servant. Find that which I desire. Wind Search.”

What she had just invoked was probing magic which used wind. With this she was able to increase her perception of the surroundings using wind. Shortly, Felmenia heard the sound of Suimei's footsteps carried to her by the wind. From the sound of his rhythmic footsteps, she could tell that he was not very far away. Felmenia headed towards the source of the footsteps quickly but calmly.

“Over here... mu?”

Felmenia had been chasing after the sound while jogging and had suddenly realized something.

(Hang on, this path...)

As she discovered just where Suimei was headed towards, her rage once more began to boil over. The path Suimei was currently taking led straight to the White Wall Garden. It was one of the gardens within Camellia Castle. Next to the audience chamber, it was the location of highest social importance in all of Camellia. Entry to the garden was heavily restricted. It was the sacred ground where the King would spend his precious private time. To enter without permission was just disrespectful. It was unforgivable. Felmenia began stomping forwards as she was no longer able to contain her rage.

She pressed forwards through the stone hallway and passed by a small courtyard. Completely intent on unleashing all of her anger at that man, she passed through the final passageway. She arrived at her destination cloaking her entire body with mana and she came out under the starry, moonlit sky... And standing there was the jet black figure of a single mage.

The White Wall Garden. At its centre was a soaring white obelisk. Standing still at the obelisk, staring at the stars as if they were gems and pretending not to see her was Suimei Yakagi. The dark blue glow of the ground stretched to the heavens, and from the heavens to the ground. Stretching from one end to the other, the magnificent zenith made for quite the backdrop. A huge moon hung overhead as if it were his companion for the night. At some point he had changed clothes. Just recently he had been wearing the 'blazer', but was now wearing well adjusted black dress clothes. Looking at that figure, it gave off the impression of a flawless uniform.

“... My goodness... It isn't in good taste to stalk someone you know? The only ones who are allowed to do that are the pitiful and foolish stray sheep who understand nothing of the world.”

Suimei said this in an exasperated voice as he bent his mouth into a fearless

and broad smile. He turned to face Felmenia with a look that suggested he had known all along that she was following him. It was as if he was sneering at a child who had gotten lost.

“... Impossible, you noticed?”

“Of course. You were darting around so much behind me, it is stranger not to notice.”

“...!!”

Suimei gave a cool reply to Felmenia's question as if it was a matter of course. He had noticed her tailing him. She was surprised that he held some technique that was able to see through her perfect concealment magic. This time, the one who had tasted defeat was Felmenia. It meant that her pursuit had actually been an invitation and she was just dancing in the palm of his hand.

Felmenia began to grind her teeth in frustration. It was the first time that she ever tasted such humiliation. She was brimming with anger. She was invited here. At this reality brought forth by her negligence, she questioned Suimei.

“... In that case, just what the hell are you planning?”

“What do you mean what am I planning? I was simply going for a walk. There are no rules here preventing me from leaving my room at night, right? And so this time, I figured I would go somewhere I hadn't been before.”

“Do you truly believe I would be fooled by such an explanation? If you noticed me, then you came here on purpose right?”

Suimei let out a laugh like a naughty child whose prank had just been discovered.

“I guess that won't fly, huh?”

“I will ask you once more. Why have you come to this place?”

“Why huh. That's...”

Suimei was giving off a refreshing smile. It was as if he predicted this flow of events and was enjoying it as it played out. And then making eyes as if he had seen through all of Felmenia's intentions...

“That's, the same reason as you. Isn't that right?”

“...”

“Oops, silence? I was convinced that was the case, was I wrong?”

Suimei began putting on black gloves using well-practised movements. As he was saying these words, it almost seemed like he was disappointed.

“I didn't think you would get so fixated on this. Honestly speaking I was hoping to settle things more peacefully.”

“How dare you state that so brazenly. Even though you never held a fragment of such intentions.”

That was right, Suimei was aiming after his Majesty the King. There was no way he was going to settle anything peacefully. Suimei then admitted Felmenia's objection with a somewhat self-deprecating smile.

“Certainly. Since I've gone through the trouble of preparing this stage I can't say that huh. There were many other ways to settle this peacefully after all.”

“Fuu...”

Felmenia thought that Suimei had just obediently admitted his ill intent.

However as Suimei had said this to Felmenia he had been staring at the heavens as if he was remembering something.

“Is this the second time I've spoken to you?”

“That's right.”

Felmenia grimaced as she answered Suimei's question.

“Hmm, somehow your quite unapproachable huh...”

“What's your point?”

“Aah, that's right. Well it's just idle chatter, there isn't really a point... My goodness, I sure am hated aren't I? Is it that? Are you still holding a grudge about what happened at that time?”

“...”

“Silence huh.”

Suimei gave another disappointed sigh. Felmenia's anger was not only rooted in that one event... She had thought that Suimei was a very

straightforward man of good nature. He had refused the request about the Demon Lord subjugation, yet he still felt regret towards the hero, he was kind. Reiji and Mizuki both never said a single bad thing about him. Felmenia still had doubts in the corner of her heart, but...

“... If I were to also speak honestly, I didn't want it to come to this.”

“Did you want to settle it sooner? Certainly that thing should have ended it much quicker, right?”

“...?”

Felmenia did not understand. Just what had Suimei understood as he gave his reply with a nod. Felmenia didn't get it, but she decided to ask something that was on her mind anyways.

“Nevertheless you bastard. Just where did you bring those clothes out from?”

Felmenia had never seen the clothes Suimei was wearing before. He was wearing a black coat with long coattails and a red rose embroidered on his lapel. A black piece of cloth shaped like an inverted sword was hanging from his neck. He was wearing a pure white tightly woven shirt. Below he was wearing impeccable black pants without a single crease the same colour as his coat.

“Eh? Aah, this suit? I always carry it around. It is my battle uniform.”

“Always carry it around? Aside from the clothes you were wearing during the summoning, you were not carrying any other clothes.”

“I had it in my bag. You had held onto and looked at it did you not?”

As he made this remark, Suimei made the gesture as if he was lifting something up. This was meant to jog Felmenia's memories. Certainly at that time, the three of them had been holding onto bags which held their personal belongings. However...

“There no way you could fit bulky clothes like that into such a small container.”

“... You know, that way of saying things makes you seem hard-headed you know”

Suimei let out an exasperated voice as he shrugged his shoulders. Felmenia was a little offended by the way he put it but she was more interested in the mystery before her. Suimei was a mage, if she thought about it carefully it should have been obvious.

“... I see, a magic tool.”

“A magic tool. It's an awfully vague answer, but you're correct. Contrary to its appearance it has a carrying capacity many times its actual size, it's one of my favourites.”

Suimei began to boast a bit. Magic tools were normal objects which were imbued with some power. They granted these objects effects that were normally impossible for the object alone. However Felmenia had never heard of an enchantment that increased the carrying capacity of a container. She couldn't think of any of the eight attributes that could create this sort of effect. If he was holding onto such an excellent magic tool that she could not understand, it seemed natural to boast of it. While Felmenia was pondering about the bag, Suimei tightened his gloves, fixed the collar of his coat and fearlessly began to talk.

“... Well then, the night is still young. Isn't about time we begin?”

Felmenia replied in an arrogant manner.

“Don't say such foolish things. Where do you think this is? This is his Majesty the King's favourite garden, the White Wall Garden. Do you think having a fight here would possibly be permitted?”

This was the White Wall Garden. The King's garden. It would be absolutely disrespectful to begin a fight here. Felmenia glared at Suimei who seemed intent on going wild in this place. However Suimei made a face as if he had just seen something funny. He returned Felmenia declaration with a fearless smile and a voice filled with scorn.

“Hmmm? The White Wall Garden huh. Surely it is quite the gorgeous garden with quite the exaggerated name to match it but... Is this truly the White Wall Garden that you speak of?”

“Just what kind of nonsense are you spouting? The white obelisk in the centre of the garden that you are standing right next to is proof enough that this is the White Wall Garden. Be it the spectacular flowers from all over the kingdom which paint the garden a beautiful array of colours or his Majesty the King's favourite place, the tower on the left side of the... Eh...?”

It wasn't there. Felmenia had raised her hand vigorously pointing to the tower that was supposed to be on the left, however the tower which housed the King's chambers was not there. There was not even a shadow of its existence there. Felmenia's mind could not keep up with what was happening. As if he

was making fun of her, Suimei spoke.

“What's wrong? Your left hand isn't pointing at anything you know? The tower which houses his Majesty the King's chambers overlooking the White Wall Garden is on your right, isn't it?”

Felmenia could only sense an ominous feeling from Suimei's words as she stared at the ground, but tempted by the devil before her she slowly raised her head and turned to her right. Suimei was in the centre giving off a sinister smile showing his canines. And just as he said, on the opposite side from where it should have been, the tower was definitely there.

“... Ridiculous. His Majesty's chambers should be on the left. Why, why is it on the right side...?”

Before this baffling phenomena, Felmenia was unable to speak. She couldn't figure it out. It was simply impossible. The tower she pointed to on the left was to her right. Just what had happened? She was sure the King's tower was on the left. She had not had many opportunities to come to this place, but when she did she had looked carefully. She was not mistaken. However right now the tower was on her right. Suimei closed his eyes slightly and explained the mystery.

“That's right. If you think about it there are only two answers. It's simple. The first is that you do not correctly remember the position of the tower. The second is that this is not the White Wall Garden that you are familiar with.”

“Ridiculous, that's just impossible...”

“Is that so? So why is the tower that was supposed to be on your left to your

right? Why is the moon rising from the right? Why have these flowers which paint the garden a beautiful array of colours planted backwards from their usual arrangement? Come on, try answering.”

“T-That's...”

It was just as Suimei said. The White Wall Garden they were in right now was reversed as if reflected in a mirror. Even the moon and constellations were reversed. Felmenia had just noticed this impossible fact. It was as if she had dived into an entirely different world.

“Phantom Road...” (Spirit World Inversion)

“Phantom... road?”

The words Suimei had spoken were not translated. It must mean that they were words that were not used in everyday language in Suimei's world or had no equivalent in Felmenia's world. Felmenia could only repeat them as she could not understand them.

“That's right. We're currently inside a barrier I made. It is an illusory world confined to a single area where everything from the real world is reversed as if reflected in a mirror. By weaving together numerals which don't exist in the real world, I created a place that does not exist. In other words it is a complex space melded by imaginary numbers.”

“Wh-what is that? Numbers that don't exist? C-Complex space? What is that? Just what the hell are you talking about? What did you do?”

Even though Suimei had explained his magic, it only made Felmenia more

irritated. On top of using a bunch of words she had never heard of, the magic itself was something that she had never heard of. A Court Mage such as herself could not understand a single thing about this magic. Magic was a mystery which borrowed the power of the elements. They borrowed power from the elements of fire, water, wind, earth, lightning, wood, light and darkness.

Without exception magic always borrowed from one of these elements as an attribute. Because of the elements' powers, miracles were born. Using mana as a driving force, chants called out to the elements, spells created a path for the elements and then the desired effect took place. However there was none of that in this magic. That essential power of the elements was nowhere to be found.

“My goodness, from there huh...? Well, I already knew this much. But the magic here is too crude. It's approximately the equivalent of what we would call the Middle Ages in terms of development. If I were to put it into numbers its a few centuries behind... Isn't that why some of the language and concepts are completely unknown to you?”

“This is, this is magic you say...? As if there's such a magic that could change the world. No matter what attribute you apply, you can't just transform the look of the world...”

“What has changed isn't just the looks you know... Is it something to get so confused over? This is only slightly intricate barrier magic you know?”

This is what Felmenia didn't understand. Instead of attributes Suimei had used an entirely different word to describe his magic...

“Barrier... magic?”

“Oi!? Don't tell me it's all the way from back there!? Don't tell me this world doesn't even have the concept of barriers!?”

“Like I said, just what you talking about...?”

“Barriers! Barrier magic! You really haven't heard of this before!?”

“I-I haven't! I have no idea what you are talking about, but that kind of suspicious magic doesn't exist in this world!”

“O... Oi seriously? I'm starting to feel peerless in this world.”

After Suimei had yelled in surprise, he held his head in one hand as if it were extremely heavy. Just how disappointed was he in this world's magic? Seemingly having given up on explaining further, he then let out an enormous sigh.

“... Whatever. Forget the complicated matters. In short this place is not the White Wall Garden that you know of. It is an imitation of the White Wall Garden that I created with magic. That's why, even if we fight here and fire off magic everywhere, everyone will still be sleeping soundly without noticing. Okay?”

“Uu...”

Felmenia still didn't understand half the things that Suimei was saying. The magic he had used was a complete mystery. However she did understand the situation. This was a place that he had prepared just for this occasion. Suimei took Felmenia's silence as her consent and continued.

“... Despite not understanding you seem to have accepted the situation. Well, it is important to calmly react to any situation. Well then, it is about time... that we begin.”

“Shut it. You've gotten conceited after luring me into an incomprehensible place but do you really think that with your pathetic level of mana that you'd be able to defeat me? I'm Astel Kingdom's Court Mage, the White Flame Felmenia. I will

never lose to the kind of a man who would use such a coward's trick without facing his opponent head on!”

Felmenia barked this towards the young man who had been talking from a high place all this time. That's right. If she had just thought it through properly everything would be fine. She was the White Flame. The mage who had arrived at the truth behind the flame. Then there was no reason to shrink back. In a fight she was absolute. All the monsters and demons she had fought to this day had been burned to ash. To this young man who lacked mana there was no way she would lose. Even if she was dragged into this unknown place, it played no factor in a fight. This was a mage who couldn't fight and could only do this sort of underhanded trick... Felmenia had no reason to show any fear.

“... Fuu. You've been prattling on about a bunch of nonsense, but the results are clear.”

“Araa, that's quite some confidence you got there. However, can you really defeat me with your strength?”

“Admirably put. Then I shall show you. The very reason that I am called White Flame within this Astel Kingdom. The truth that I arrived at at the very peak of magic. My flame!”

“Hmm... truth huh?”

As Felmenia made her grand declaration in a loud voice as if to sing her own praises, she had heard a stern reply without a single hint of a joke behind it. After hearing her words, Suimei who had been making a refreshing expression up to this point had suddenly changed complexions. It was an extremely noticeable change. This was inevitable. He was dealing with the truth of the flame. After hearing it, after seeing it, a normal mage would not be able to stay calm. Felmenia began her chant with confidence. She began to manifest the magic that she had spent her life to attain.

“—Oh Flame. Thou art endowed with the flame of justice, but disconnected from the flame of logic. Burn everything to ashes, the white calamity of truth! Truth Flare!”

At the same time as she finished her chant with her key word, white flames began to gather around her. The flame absorbed all the wind around it, it was many times hotter than a red flame. It was capable of burning any material to ashes, the true flame.

“Wha... eh?”

Suimei let out a strange noise as the white flames began to engulf him. Surely that was an expression of bewilderment. There was no way he could do anything but stand there dumbfounded. It was obvious. The white flame that everyone beheld with reverence, that everyone aspired to hold was currently surrounding him. As another mage, Felmenia understood that it was only natural he could only surrender without resisting. It was natural. It was natural, but for some reason while still making the same bewildered face while surrounded by the white flames, he timidly snapped his fingers. It happened immediately at the snap. The white flame had immediately changed colours into a red flame.

“Wh-what the!?”

Shortly after Felmenia raised her voice in surprise at the phenomenon occurring before her eyes, the fires that had been surrounding Suimei gradually lost its ferocity, as a result, it had vanished as if nothing had happened. Suimei was giving a surprised look to the side. After staring at the place where the white flames had been burning up until now, Suimei finally turned to Felmenia.

“... Um, is that it?”

He was making an expression like all of his expectations were betrayed as the result had been so insignificant. It was a phrase uttered only at the greatest of anti-climaxes. At his words, Felmenia could only allow her confusion to burst out like a dam.

“Wh-wh-wh-why!? Why did that happen!? Why did my white flame disappear!? That was the peak of the flame that only those who attained the truth could wield. Why did it, with only a simple snap of the fingers...?”

“Uwaa.... why? Are you seriously saying that? You said the truth so I was wondering what kind of dangerous magic you were about to cast. All you did was mix in oxygen to speed up the rate of combustion...”

“W-what's with that attitude!? M-My flame is!”

Felmenia was not able to put her words together at Suimei's remarkable disappointment in her. Just why did the white flame disappear? Just why was he so disappointed? Suimei seemed to be at the peak of his exasperation and gave Felmenia some candid advice.

“... There was no curse. There was no meaning engraved in the flame. It didn't use any sort of legend as an origin. It didn't even have the power of magic. If I was your teacher, I would be yelling at you to start over from the basics.”

“W-what!? Just where is my magic lacking!?”

“Everywhere, just everywhere! It has nothing of what I just mentioned. You're just a regular flamethrower! Actually you're worst than that!”

“Whaaat!?”

“Haa, that's enough already...”

Suimei was tired of explaining every little detail. He was looking at Felmenia with both exasperation and pity, which only fanned the flames of her anger. She couldn't figure out how her spell had been broken. Just what had happened? Just what had he done? Suimei let out another grand sigh, and suddenly below his feet... a magic circle appeared out of nowhere.

“What the!?”

“... What is it now?”

Suimei's harsh tone of exasperation filled with criticism was one thing, but Felmenia was far more focused on the impossible phenomenon that had just occurred before her eyes.

“A magic circle just drew itself on the ground... Impossible...”

“... Heh?”

“Heh, my ass! Why... why did a magic circle suddenly appear at your feet!? That's just impossible isn't it!? S-Suimei Yakagi!? What the hell did you do!?”

Felmenia began to yell intensely at the event that had occurred before her. Suimei then knit his brows making a far more evil expression than before. Magic circles weren't only restricted to the earth. They could be placed on

floors and walls, rocks and paper. If it was a medium with a surface you could write on, then it could be used by inscribing a part of, or an entire spell. It was used as an aid to simplify the use of magic. Normally one would inscribe their spell by drawing numerals, characters and geometric shapes. Not only did it take time to draw the circle, it was a delicate process. Obviously in the middle of combat it was not something one could just prepare. To have drawn a circle without making a single movement was just...

“No, this much is normal isn't it?”

“How is that normal!? Just how can you just manipulate mana in a way that a magic circle is arbitrarily drawn on it own!?”

“Isn't it obvious you prepare it beforehand...?”

Suimei suddenly came to some realization, and once again spoke as if at wits' end.

“... This to? This world is really that far behind? Are we seriously not finished treading backwards with this world's magic?”

Suimei was ignoring Felmenia at this point and just speaking to himself in anguish. After racking his brain for a bit, he placed his finger in front of his face and started to draw out a circle with it. He then spoke up in a completely different tone.

“... Ummm, hey. This is something put in place beforehand. A part of the magic spell is used to construct the circle. The automatic magic circle is then drawn in the world before you as if it were ready to be invoked at once. It is then becomes the foundation of the magic spell and is set aside. After setting it

aside, when you use magic the magic circle will automatically reform so that the magic can be executed quickly. Understand?”

“Eh, Ah...?”

“Don't chirp out stupid words like there's no way that's possible. It's happening right before your eyes after all. Before you break out into another rant allow me to say one thing. I'm not only referring to the magic just now, but if you deny the mysteries that are occurring before your eyes, I will not acknowledge you as a fellow scholar of mysteries. Got it?”

“...”

Felmenia was unable to speak before Suimei who had begun strictly lecturing her. She was bothered by his manner of speaking, but more importantly she had never heard of the existence of a technique to automatically form magic circles. Up to this point she had never witnessed anyone using magic circles in that way. The sage had also never spoken of such things.

“... To simplify the construction of magic spells, it is an absolute necessity in battle. Is this truly a fantasy world of swords and magic? If it's like this the world we came from is much for fantasy like...”

“T-the technique to simplify the construction of magic at least exists! The most extreme version of this is the no chant technique!”

“Eh? What's with that? Is omitting the chant such a high level technique?”

“O-of course.”

“If we're talking about large scale magic it's a different story, but what? How about this? Is this an amazing technique to you?”

As Suimei stated this in an exasperated voice, he snapped his fingers.

Immediately, at the sound of the snap produced by his fingers, the air in front of Felmenia burst violently. She didn't even have time to take a breath. Just like that, the air before her burst and spread out in all directions. It was a violent shockwave which surpassed the power of wind that would crush anything in the vicinity.

“Ku, ah... What... the? No chant, not even a key word...?”

“Amaazing Suimei-kuun! You just used magic without a chant, with this you'll join the ranks of the greatest mages~!... Haaa... Just stupid.”

Suimei began puffing his chest out in pride, and then immediately became downcast. As if suddenly doused in cold water, Suimei was just not in the mood to continue like this.

“I'm tired of explaining things. I won't be answering anymore of your questions. Therefore...”

Suimei began his spell.

“Archiatius Overload!” (Mana Furnace, Load Activation)

Was that a magic chant? Archiatius, overload. It was far too short to distinguish between the chant and key word. He did not call out to anything. He was just talking to himself. However the magic circle at his feet began to give out a brilliant light. And then, the magic circle giving off the brilliance of a rainbow released something within the young man.

“... !?”

An overwhelming amount of mana had been pouring out of him. In the instant he closed his eyes, the vast power which was like violent torrent calmed down. As he opened his eyes again the vast amount of mana was peacefully contained within him. Suimei's mere figure gave off an overwhelming sense of pressure.

“Y-your mana increased!? Just what...”

“What? I said I was tired of it already you know? So don't speak anymore.

Ahh, I got it. You're surprised by the amplification of mana right? I got it. But you're questions are not worth answering anymore.”

Suimei was irritated. He had no intention at all to hear more of Felmenia's questions. And then, after he once more calmed himself down...

“... Fuu. Even though I said we should begin, we've wasted quite a lot of time... Well then, little miss mage, is it my turn yet?”

Suimei gave out his final question. As he breathed out it seemed that he was no longer even amused... Felmenia still could not understand just what was happening before her eyes. She had thought so multiple times since arriving here already. Just like this man had said, he had activated the magic circle to amplify his mana. To Felmenia it seemed like it was a contradiction to construct a magic circle to simplify the construction of a magic spell. It took time to draw magic circles. It would only increase the time it took to cast the magic. However the man before her eyes had done just so. Not only that he invoked

the miracle known as magic ignoring even the bare minimum time requirement.

There was no falsehood in this fact. There was no affectation to this fact. Felmenia was no longer able to treat this young man as inferior. Things that she could not do, let alone understand, he could do with ease. This young man was definitely superior to her. In a world that she did not know, he had been walking a path of magic that she could not recognize. He possessed an absolute knowledge of magic far beyond herself. Therefore...

... Surely, this young man was stronger than herself.

... Surely, this young man was stronger than the Sage who had taught her.

... Surely, this young man was even stronger than the hero Reiji.

... Surely, this young man, before even the Demon Lord who threatens to bring the world to ruin...

“... Just what kind of person are you?”

“... That's right. Ever since coming here I had never named myself properly once. Fine. As a special treat just for you, I will name myself... I am a magician, Yakagi Suimei. A scholar of the mysteries from modern Japan who seeks the mysteries to attain all the truth of the world. ”

Magician, Yakagi Suimei.

This was the name of the mage that brought the greatest mage of Astel down to the ground. The name of the man that Felmenia would never be able to catch up to.



“Fuu...”

Suimei gave out a bold and quiet snort. Just as he had planned, Felmenia Stingray had been successfully lured into his barrier. He had activated his mana furnace. As a magician he prepared to demonstrate his maximum power. In front of him, Felmenia had been bound in place by fear as she witnessed the overwhelming difference in power between them. If anyone else were to witness this scene, they could easily tell that using his maximum power was simply going too far.

Felmenia Stingray, no, this entire world's magicians were just that far behind the magicians from his own world. In that case, it would make sense to hold back his power. There was no need to waste mana. He could overwhelm her smartly and efficiently by using only the required amount of power in a gentlemanly way. However, this was not Suimei's intention. Even if the magicians from this world did not understand the many systems of magic. Even if they did not know how to effectively use a magic circle. Even if they believed chanting was essential to magic. Even if they did not know how to build the very foundation of a magician within themselves, the mana furnace. To Suimei, magicians were still magicians.

He had prepared the stage for battle. As long as he was the host who invited the other party to a battle, no matter how low a level they were, it was only the proper etiquette to demonstrate all of his power as a magician of the Society. A magician should pour his entire soul into his magic to fascinate his opponent to the point that they could only surrender. This was Yakagi Suimei's pride as a magician. The two magicians stared each other down for a moment. Of course there was no signal for the battle to begin. The battle had already begun. It was only a matter of who would make their move first. Felmenia made the first move as it seemed she was no longer able to stand the tension in

the air.

“... Tch! —Oh Flame! Thou art endowed with the flame of justice, but disconnected from the flame of logic! Burn everything to ashes, the white calamity of truth! Truth Flare!”

It was the same magic that she had previously demonstrated, the white flame of truth. However it was simply magic that created flames with a higher temperature than normal, there was no truth to it. Suimei was truly disappointed that that was all there was to it when it had such a grand description and name.

The amount of mana poured into the magic was a number of times larger than the previous time. The magic flame began to swirl like a whirlpool . After forming into a point the flames dove towards Suimei as if to pierce him...

Suimei switched gears immediately. The flames flooded towards him completely with the intent to burn him to death. He held no admiration for the flames coming towards him, but he also couldn't just stand there and let them kill him. Suimei took in a quick breath and focuses his gaze. He gathered his mana, and deployed his magic.

“Secandum ex Quartum Excipio” (Number 2, Number 3, Number 4 Rampart, Local Deployment)

This was Suimei's defensive magic. It was the magic he was prepared to use when they first arrived to this world at the summoning ritual site, a rampart of a brilliant golden fortress. The ramparts deployed as if pushed out one behind the other by Suimei's palm as he thrust his arm forwards. Three golden magic circles formed a shield in front of him. There was no way a simple hot flame could have any effect on it. The fortress' walls were sturdy. It would not fall from only a flame. The flames were destined to vanish as they encroached on the three magic circles piled one on top the other.

The white flames crashed against the golden magic circle with a thunderous roar. The white flames were no longer able to progress further forwards and let off pure white sparks in all other directions. The flames were pouring into the magic circle with the intent of shaving it down with sustained pressure. As thunderous roars filled the atmosphere their entire surroundings were being engulfed in the white flames colliding off of the golden shield.

One second, two seconds, three seconds, four seconds had passed. However the white flames did not pierce through. Suimei's number 2 rampart had stopped the flames from progressing completely. Behind it the number 3 rampart had been rotating and deploying another spell. The pure white flames began to lose its colour and began to turn red. And finally, the number 4 rampart reflected all the power which assailed the shield formation, and let out an explosion in all directions.

“It's, It's not over yet!”

Felmenia made a flustered proclamation signalling her attempt to follow up with another spell. The white flames that had been repelled by Suimei's shield that were still hanging around came to a stop in the air.

“—Oh Flames!”

Felmenia called out to the flames in her surrounding. Instead of firing in a straight line towards Suimei, she directed the flames to attack him from both sides. The white flames danced in the air as they curved to attack Suimei in a pincer attack. It seemed her title as a Court Mage was properly earned after all. The deployment of her mana, her control of the flames and the speed at which she could accomplish this were are impeccable. She truly did deserve praise for the skill with which she manipulated magic.

However in the end, it didn't matter how skillful she was if the quality of the magic itself was poor. Her magic did not contain enough destructive force to harm let alone pierce Suimei's golden fortress ramparts or even Suimei's natural magical defences. Even though the flames had engulfed the entire area, there was not a single burn mark on Suimei's coat. The white flames were approaching Suimei from the sides, but the path in front of him was wide open. There was quite the distance to cover, and thus Suimei began to chant his spell for acceleration magic.

“Mass Gravitās Reductio.” (Gravity Reduction, Decrease Mass)

As he spoke these words, Suimei had been released from the shackles of gravity and his body had become extraordinarily light. It was as if he weighed nothing at all. He leaped forwards. No, it was closer to flight at that point. Suimei's black coat fluttered behind him as he avoided the encroaching white flames. He tore through the sky straight at Felmenia like a swallow in flight.

“That's way too fa...!?”

Felmenia let out a complaint. He had approached her so quickly she could easily mistake it for teleportation. Before she even realized he had moved he was already three metres away from her. Before she could even finish her complaint, Suimei snapped his fingers. For a single moment, he directed a cold gaze towards Felmenia. This was one of Suimei's attack magics as a magician. It compressed then released the air in an explosive burst and required neither chants nor words to activate. Simply by snapping his fingers the magic would be invoked. It's simple, thus it was fast. The effectiveness, impact and physicality were all plain to see. As if a transparent bomb had just let out a transparent explosion, a shock wave spread forth from right under Felmenia's feet. The explosion was extremely near to her, but Felmenia had managed to

dodge out of the way by a hair's breadth.

“Ugu, ah...!”

As if to seal off her escape route, Suimei snapped his fingers once more causing Felmenia to sharply change her course. Felmenia was practically dancing at the consecutive explosions as she ran away for dear life while screaming at her assailant.

“T-This is unreasonable! Just why can you fire off magic one after the other so easily!?”

“Ha... If you can't do it then you are just a third rate user. Were you hoping for a turn based battle where we shoot at each other one after the other? We aren't playing an RPG here you know?”

Yes, this wasn't a game. It was a trial of life and death. It was a world where wasting even a single second could mean meeting an untimely demise. It was completely different from Felmenia's way of magic. Suimei pulled a vial out of his pocket while Felmenia was still running away and quickly popped it open. Inside the vial was mercury. It was the only metal in the world which retained a liquid state at room temperature. Alchemists nicknamed it the androgynous monster. Suimei began casting his spell as he began pouring out the liquid from the vial. He swung his arm from one side to the other, drawing a line with the vial in the air. The mercury hung in the air as if it waiting for Suimei's command.

“Permutatio Coagulatio vis Lamina!” (Transform, Solidify, Achieve Power)

Suimei grabbed the mercury while it was still in a liquid state and swung it down behind him as if flicking blood off of a sword. What Suimei was now holding behind him was now in fact a sword. A mercury katana. Using magic he could freely control the shape of the mercury. A shapeless weapon. A transforming mercury armament.

“—Oh Earth! Harden thy body and become a stone to smash my enemy! Stone Raid!”

Right before the mercury weapon took shape, Felmenia had completed her magic. She gathered the earth before her into small stones and began firing in a straight line. As it flew nearer to its target, the rock tapered off to a point and had become the size of a fist.

“Eat this...!”

“Too naive!”

The flying stone had been intercepted by the fabricated sword. Before a magician's eyes it wasn't impossible to seize a rifle round in flight. Thus, a flying stone could not possibly pose a threat. The tip of the mercury blade was refined by mana and smashed the stone to pieces. More stones flew in after the first but were all smashed by Suimei's elegant flowing swordsmanship.

“You're mage yet you can use a sword!?”

“So what if I can use a sword? To a magician of my world close combat techniques are indispensable you know? Well, to me there aren't any obstacles to using magic whether it be near or far anyways...”

“Fuck... fuck fuckfuckfaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAH!”

Felmenia began blindly firing off stones as fast as she could in desperation. However, the stones would never reach him. They did not even leave a single speck of dust on his clothes. Lumps of earth came crashing down all over the place.

“—Oh Flames! Thou shall become one that only pierces, strike the enemy who sta— ”

“Permutatio Coagulation vis Flagellum!” (Transform, Flow, Sharpen)

They had both begun chanting at the same time, however Suimei's chant was far shorter. It was simply old fashioned to think that long chants were any good. To Suimei optimization was important. The key factor was the ability to bring out the most of one's power to create the desired effect. He would remove the unnecessary portions. Then he would investigate the vocabulary word for word. He would aim to bring the chant down to a single word or sentence. When this was accomplished the speed of the magic was guaranteed.

As Suimei reminisced, a magic circle had constructed itself at the tip of his mercury katana as if he was piercing it down the centre. Suimei then swung the sword down with his wrist as fast as he could. As he did this, the hard and sharp sword made of mercury transformed into a metal whip and flowed as if it was made of leather. The whip struck right next to Felmenia, interrupting her incomplete chant.

“—ands!?”

The tip of the whip surpassed the speed of sound. A violent explosive sound roared through the air. The whip had gouged the earth quite deeply. The metal whip held a destructive power that could not even be compared to that of a regular leather whip. Suimei could control its weight, hardness, sharpness and length at will. Even if one's body was made entirely of thick steel, he could cut through all of it as if it was a thin sheet of paper.

“Uu, guu... That's, impossible...”

He could reap her life away with a single, swift swing of his arm. Felmenia was no longer able to move even a single step as she came upon this realization. Her mouth which always fluently chanted spells had also been petrified. She couldn't even chant a single verse of a spell. Her face had twisted in despair. All colour had drained from her face. Was this the end of the fight? No, she had still not given in. As long as she did not willingly bend a knee down to him, she would not be defeated. He would engrave upon the deepest corners of her heart that even the mere thought of rising up against him again was impossible.

With these intentions in mind, mana violently exploded out of Suimei as he activated his mana furnace. Not only the ground, the entire castle seemed to shake before his power. The violent torrent of mana began clashing against itself, with nowhere to go, blue lightning began to burst forth with a dragon like roar. In front of him, Felmenia was shaking and had completely lost all colour to her face. Before a power that she could not possibly oppose, she fell to her knees and continued to stare at Suimei in fear. Suimei began his chant.

“Velam Nox. Lacrima Potestas.” (Within the Curtains. The Majesty of the Tears Flowing in the Night.)

An enormous magic circle large enough to wrap the entire garden began to expand from Suimei's feet. The circle poured out an ultramarine glow of mana and shined far brighter than the stars in the sky. Its brightness was so dazzling that it seemed even more unreal than the illusory world.

“Olympus Quod Terra Misceo Misucui Mixtim” (Decorate Heaven and Earth with its Symbol)

As each chant was spoken, more phenomena spread out. The spell was not made up of a single chant. As each chant brought a new phenomenon into the world, they would form together as a single grand phenomenon. Unlike the magic of this world, the chanting itself was the embodiment of power. The chants continued, the world changed. Like fireflies decorating the night sky, golden particles rose from the ground and began to whirl up into the sky. The golden lights raced towards the heavens as if to chase the stars.

“Infestant Malitia” (Infest Towards the Present Irrationality)

And then, high above at the zenith, a massive magic circle appeared. It filled the entire sky and blotted out the stars. Within the circle, countless smaller magic circles were being formed.

“Dezzmor or Pluv Iainces Santer” (Dazzle and Rain Incessantly)

The giant magic circle above them was a complex wide area spell intertwining multiple types of magic. The main attributes were ether and the void. Its origins were from Kabbalah numerology and astrology. It was a modern magic which fused together magic from multiple systems. There was

only one verse left. Before continuing, Suimei gave a bold smile as he pronounced Felmenia's sentence.

“Now then little miss Court Mage, make sure to pour everything into defending okay?”

Felmenia had nothing to say at these words. She could only deploy her defensive magic as she clung onto dear life. And then...

“Enth, Astarte—” (Oh Stars, Fall Down)

This was Suimei's keyword. With these words, from the many magic circles dotting the starry sky, pillars of light rained down. The starlight mixed with mana and fell to earth as if tears were falling from the heavens, creating a scene akin to a meteor shower. All sound was drowned out by the thunderous roars let out as the pillars crashed into the ground. No spot of ground underneath his magic had been left unscathed, it was a magnificent spectacle. Even a giant monster would be struck dead in a single hit from one ray of light, yet from the countless magic circles came a never-ending torrential downpour of light. It was obvious that Felmenia had no means to oppose the sheer destruction happening around her and could only let out an earth shattering scream as she was drowned by the compassion-less light.

This was star magic, star fall. It borrowed the power of the constellations and the legends engraved in them by humans. The magic would manifest itself at the words left behind by Pericles – Enth Astarte. This was one of Yakagi Suimei's greatest spells.



And finally, the raining stars had calmed down. All that was left behind, as if the scene of destruction had just been a dream, was the peaceful scenery of the original White Wall Garden, the figure of Yakagi Suimei in his impeccable black suit and the the figure of Felmenia, her pure white robe in complete tatters.

“It cannot be...”

Felmenia could only utter those words as she sat on the floor unable to move at all. Suimei held a mercury katana to her throat.

“It's my win. Any objections?”

Felmenia let out a trembling voice in response to Suimei's declaration of victory.

“A-are you a damn monster...? With this kind of skill you dared to prattle on about being unable to fight...? Why do you refuse to fight the Demon Lord? If you were to go, even the Demon Lord would...”

“Be defeated? That's the very definition of saying something stupid. I had said this in the audience chamber as well, but there's a saying that a fight is in the numbers. History has proven this time and again. No matter how much power one possesses, they cannot win before overwhelming numbers. There's no precedent of it ever happening. No matter how good one is at fighting, a single human is nothing but a tiny existence before the violence and flood of emotions born from numbers.”

Suimei had said his piece, but he had much more to say to the defeated Felmenia.

“The one you are requesting us to fight is not only the Demon Lord Nakshatra right? There's also the Demon Lord's subordinates, an entire army of demons and otherworldly creatures. The bar-code baldy had said that the army which destroyed the nation of Noshias numbered one million. If you think about it, there would be far more than that in reserve, there's no way an entire force would spend all their resources at once after all. So is the total number double that? Triple that? Even at just a million do you plan for me to foolishly face those numbers? Even if you gathered together a few elite warriors with a plan to pierce their heart, there is no guarantee that your strike could even reach them through those unusual numbers you know? No matter how you look at it you simply cannot defeat them like that.”

“Just what the hell are you saying? There's a saying here that a fight is determined by an individual's valour. With that kind of power victory would be certain, defeat would be impossible.”

“Are you an idiot? When it comes to war potential quality and quantity are entirely different categories. It is not necessary that quality equals quantity understand?”

“A mage... A mage of your standing would dare to say such a thing?”

“Haaa? Me? Stop it, I'm not yet a first class magician. Well I have been told that I have a talent for it, but in my world I'm a magician somewhere in the lower-mid ranks... Well I guess you are right in a sense. Certainly if it were the ones who stand on the absolute summit of that world.. The guy at the very top may very well be able to do it while laughing. However that discussion is completely unrelated to this.”

“ ... ”

Felmenia was at a loss for words. Suimei did not know whether this was because of the shock of hearing about the terrifying existences from Suimei's

world or whether it was Suimei's boastful laugh as he talked about it. However it was clear that she had nothing more to say about the overwhelming difference in numbers.

“Well, I knew this before we began, but the magic in this world is considerably far behind. To put it frankly this was not all that enjoyable. Though that may be a little hard on you.”

Suimei was speaking of his honest feelings. He had been excited to face unknown magics and to witness mysteries that he had never seen before. Suimei desired this fight so that he could bear witness to and unravel those unknown magics. However in this fight, there was absolutely none of that. It was unexpected, surprising and simply a one-sided slaughter. His victory was simply a matter of course. There was no rejoicing this fact. Now that he had arrived at his inevitable victory, it was time to thrust the results before Felmenia.

“Now then. It's about time to close the curtains on this little play, mage.”

It was a cold and inhuman voice that would send shivers down the backs of any who heard it. He directed a cold gaze to Felmenia and declared his intention to bring everything to an end. Felmenia was still sitting on the ground, unable to stand up. Her face had gone completely pale as if she was facing the end of the world.

“A-are you going to kill me...?”

“I wonder? Just how do you think I should settle this?”

“I-I am a Court Mage...”

“As a Court Mage, are you saying it is alright no matter what you do?”

Felmenia was grasping on her title as if to encourage herself, a tragic struggle. However this tiny struggle was brought to an end as Suimei thrust his mercury katana at her throat.

“Ah, uu...”

Suimei poured on more harsh words at Felmenia, who was completely gripped by fear.

“After all this don't just seize up in fear, you damn good for nothing. I was simply responding in kind to your advances.”

“S-shut your mouth! Even to his Majesty his King you would...”

“What about the King?”

Pushed completely into the corner, Felmenia had brought up the King. Suimei could not understand why had she mentioned him now of all times. King Almadious had nothing to do with the current quarrel.

“You're, aiming for... His Majesty the King...”

“Ha? Just what kind of excuse are you making after all this? Since when have I been aiming at that kindhearted man? I don't have a slightest reason to aim for the King you know?”

“Eh...? But you're...”

“Fuu.... That's enough of your pathetic excuses.”

“— !!”

Felmenia had gotten goosebumps from Suimei's cold declaration as he continued to speak down to her.

“A magician should always be ready to compensate for their actions with an equal reaction. Isn't this right? Court mage.”

One should always be prepared to pay for their actions. To the magicians of Suimei's world, this was obvious. However the young mage from another world, Felmenia, had not yet made that kind of resolve.

“P-Please! Anything but that!”

Felmenia had completely discarded her pride and prostrated herself before Suimei. She was begging to be spared, to be overlooked, that she we would never go against him again. However Suimei was not amused by her actions and spoke in an evil tone.

“Oi oi, you were brimming with the intent to kill me just a moment ago, and now you're begging for your life?”

“Th-that's not true! I never had the intent to kill Suimei-dono! I was just thinking of punishing you a little...”

Felmenia had begun shaking her head violently and was staring at Suimei with a confused gaze. Though Suimei also did not wish for this to be a life or death situation, her resolve was still too weak. She had been prepared to beat down her opponent but never considered that the opposite could happen, her current pathetic state was the price she paid. Suimei had heard that she was a noble family's princess, in part her arrogance must have been born from this fact.

“Is it true you had no such intent?”

“It's true! I swear upon the Goddess Alshuna, it isn't a lie!”

“I don't know how much weight that holy woman's name holds, but as a Japanese citizen from another world it has nothing to do with me.”

With a click, the katana which had no guard made a sound as if it had one. As she was not Japanese, she had no idea what exactly that sound signified. However she could tell by instinct that she was drawing closer and closer to losing her life.

“I-I'm begging you! I don't want to die yet! I don't want to die... please, forgive me.”

It seemed that Suimei had taken his bullying a little far. Now that he had struck so deeply into her heart, it was time to move onto the main point of this entire endeavour. Suimei put on an act with an ill-mannered attitude.

“... Well, let's see. In exchange for sparing you, I'll have you accept a few my conditions.”

“... C-conditions?”

“That's right. First, you will never speak of what had happened here today to anybody. Second, you will not tell a single soul that I'm a magician. Especially not Reiji and Mizuki. Got it?”

As Suimei had pushed her for her consent, Felmenia trembled in fear as she shook her head vigorously.

“W-wait a moment. Reiji-dono and Mizuki-dono would be fine, but I've already told just his Majesty the King of the fact that Suimei-dono is a mage. In that case what do I do...?”

“Heeeh. How unexpected. I'm surprised someone as overconfident as you would talk to anyone of this. You came to pick a fight with someone you thought was completely below you without even preparing any kind of insurance in case you lost after all... Well, I don't mind if it is only that much. At any rate from here on I will have you keep any further details to yourself.”

Felmenia gave out a sigh of relief as she evaded the danger of having already breached Suimei's conditions. Suimei then brought up the final, and most important condition.

“And finally the third condition. I will have you sign this document about the aforementioned conditions.”

Suimei pulled his hand down in the air and pulled out a single piece of paper and a pen from thin air. The pen was the same one he always used. The paper had enumerated points written on it in some foreign language. Obviously, Felmenia could not understand any of the words.

“What is this?”

“It's just a simple document. It simply states that you will definitely follow the conditions I had just laid out before you. A formal contractual document. All you need to do is sign it.”

“... I understand. I will sign it.”

Felmenia still had some doubts, but had still decided to hesitantly sign the document. Even though she held doubts she could not imagine just what could happen from simply signing it. At any rate she didn't have any choice. She signed the document and stamped her thumbprint on it in a seal of blood.

Suimei saw this through to the very end, and continued speaking to the pale-faced Felmenia.

“... Also, I forgot to mention this. Now that you've signed this, in the case case that you break our promise... you'll die.”

“W-What did you say?”

“Fuu, you were planning to speak about all that had happened to the King right after this regardless of agreeing right? But that's not going to happen you know? I also do not wish to complicate matters any further than it already has after all.”

“Wait, no matter how you look at it just from something like this there's no way you could...”

“Before a magician who manipulates the mysteries of the world the word impossible does not exist. It has no value.”

Suimei did not hold her in contempt, but to Felmenia's dubious inquiry there was a straightforward way of demonstrating his point. Suimei let go of his mercury katana, and poked the contract with the tip of his finger covered in mana. As he did this, Felmenia gripped her heart in pain.

“Ridiculous... UuuuaaAAAAAh!?”

“By the way the effect is exactly like this. Your heart will feel as if it were being crushed. It is quite difficult to withstand right?”

Suimei withdrew his finger. Felmenia gasped for air as she was released from the crushing pain, but still let out a complaint with no energy behind it.

“Shi, Wha... You, never said anything about this...”

“Whether I said anything or not, you don't have any choice. Whatever, it isn't a such a difficult matter. All you need to do is shut your mouth. If you just forget everything and pretend nothing happened, no harm will come to you. Isn't it a much fairer request than trying to sell someone on picking a fight with the Demon Lord?”

Felmenia could not rebuke his words. However...

“Ah... U... Uu... so cruel. You're so cruel... Uuuu, uuueeeeeeeeh.”

The last shred of pride she held onto had vanished as she burst into tears and began wailing.

(Ah... Did I maybe go a little too far?)

It seemed that she was quite magnificently broken down. Even Suimei who saw it as a necessity to face another magician with hostility and severity, was unable to hide his perplexity at the situation. There was a wide gap between these two magicians, not only in terms of level but also in terms of mental fortitude. Suimei had no intent of being so cruel and called out to Felmenia in a flustered voice.

“W-well that's how it is. You'll properly keep your promise right? I also don't want to needlessly kill anybody, it would be bad for my heart.”

Feeling a bit of sympathy, Suimei's tone had softened up compared to before. He did not expect her to start crying. He had no idea whether or not Felmenia was even listening to him as she showed no signs of stopping. Having no idea what to do, Suimei scratched his head and acted out in slight contradiction to his actions up until now.

“Renovatio Redivivus... there.” (Restoration and Reconstitution)



Suimei cast restoration magic to at least fix up her clothes. A magic circle appeared beneath the seated Felmenia and began rising upwards. The tears in her robes, the burn marks and even the dirt had all been spotlessly removed and repaired. Suimei then left Felmenia behind and exited the garden.

A fight between fellow magicians was by no means always a fight to the death. Rather, a magician taking the life of another magician was a very rare event. If one were to invade their workshop it would be an entirely different matter, but in all other cases magicians held respect for one another. They were all comrades who had to join hands together. Nowadays, magic had given way to science and was in decline. Its development had almost ground to a halt. Those who could use magic were a precious existence.

This is why even if the schools of magic they studied were different, there was an implicit rule between magicians that a magician should never take the life of another without reason to avoid the absolute extinction of magic from the world. For that purpose, the contract he had just used earlier was often used to settle disputes. In exchange for not killing their opponents, the contract was used to prevent any further harm from being brought to the victor. This way it was fine to leave their opponent alive. The number of magicians would not decrease. The ratio of those who studied the mysteries of the modern world would remain unchanged.

Except for a few rare cases, a duel between magicians was not a fight to the death. They would compete with magic and demonstrate just how far they had dove into the the mysteries of the world. In short the precision, strength, complexity, theory and special characteristics of their magic were put on full display until they mutually agreed on a result. Now that Suimei thought back on his fight with Felmenia, there wasn't a single magic shown to him which made him unintentionally raise his voice. There was no point in celebrating his victory. That's why a single thought came back to his mind.

“Really, they're so far behind...”

His exchange with Felmenia had started to worry him. Hereafter, it was absolutely necessary for him to live in this world. He was worrying whether or not there were any mysteries in this world that would make his heart dance. If there was nothing to spark their imagination, a magician would become a fossil. This was also an obstacle to the pursuit of Suimei's thesis. However setting all that aside...

(She had no intention to kill, right...)

Suimei recalled the words Felmenia had yelled in the pits of despair. How could she spout such words after setting up that dangerous golem? However, Suimei certainly did not sense any hint of lying within the girl at that time.

“... I guess I'll investigate it a little.”

Felmenia had also said that he was aiming for the King, now that Suimei thought about it carefully, it did not seem like an excuse. If he thought of this as some sort of misunderstanding, then just what lied beyond it? Suimei felt that the curtain had yet to close on this matter. Felmenia would no longer make any moves. Things had gotten a little out of hand, but Suimei had accomplished his primary goal. There was very little risk left in this regard. In that case, it should be fine to try and make a move. Suimei calmly flung his black coat around him and vanished into the darkness of the night.



A few days had passed since the matter in the White Wall Garden. Astel's king Almadious Root Astel had summoned Felmenia Stingray to his audience chamber. The purpose of the summons was of course to hear about the state of the hero Reiji's tutelage in magic directly from the mouth of his teacher. The King had asked several others the same thing, however all he had heard were abstract words of praise like 'a mass of talent, 'genius of magic' and 'pinnacle of the world'. From the concrete portions of the reports he could only tell that Reiji was quite talented at magic. The King felt responsible for sending the hero out into danger, and had wanted to know more details.

Felmenia knelt before the king as her pure white robe gently fluttered behind her and gave her assessment on both the hero Reiji and Mizuki Anou at length. According to her, the hero Reiji held an extraordinary talent for magic. His capacity for mana was over ten times greater than the Court Mages of the castle. His fine control with regards to technique and mana still had shortcomings, however his ability to quickly understand magic was abnormal. Though it was not to Reiji's level, it seemed that Mizuki Anou also possessed a fair amount of power. Her ability to understand and conceptualize magic was simply inhuman. Felmenia did not understand just how she had managed to become like that, but she found it was a shame that Mizuki did not receive divine protection during the hero summoning.

“— That is all. Reiji-dono as well as Mizuki-dono's ability to learn magic so quickly is simply astonishing. One day they will surely become mages comparable to the great mages around the world.”

Felmenia ended her report with an added complement. Suddenly the King questioned her in a joking matter.

“Will they surpass even you?”

“If it is Reiji-dono's power, it is possible.”

“I see. Then I am relieved. If Reiji-dono holds such a talent for magic, my worries seemed to be needless.”

“Ha. I was also surprised. In spite of having touched upon magic only two weeks ago, he's become a match for an intermediate level mage in terms of ability. It isn't just for show that he was chosen by the world to become a hero. If you'll allow me to humbly speak of my feelings as a single mage, I'm quite envious.”

Felmenia spoke quietly. The King could not clearly see her face as she was knelt down before him, however he could guess that her jealousy was showing on her face. It was only natural. As far as he had heard, the hero Reiji had learned magic from her at an absolutely alarming rate as if to deny her efforts over these long years.

“That is certainly so. However, if he didn't hold at least that much power...”

“It is as your Majesty says, he wouldn't be able to defeat the Demon Lord.”

“Umu.”

The King gave a nod at her opinion which matched his. He had heard everything that he wanted to concerning the hero and spoke of his decision to Felmenia.

“Court mage Felmenia Stingray. I have heard your report. There are three more days until Reiji-dono departs. Until then, work hard and lend him your power.”

“As you will. Well then, with this I will...”

Felmenia respectfully accepted the King's commands and was preparing to leave. However the King did not yet give her his consent to leave. His business with her wasn't finished yet.

“—Felmenia. I have other things that I would like to ask you. Is it alright?”

“Eh...? Yes, please ask me anything you will.”

“About that young man, Reiji-dono's friend Suimei-dono.”

The King spoke the name of the hero Reiji's friend, Suimei Yakagi. He was worried about Suimei just as he had been worried about the hero Reiji. There was also the case of his ability to use magic and snooping around the castle, but the thing that the King was most worried about was the impending collision between Suimei and Felmenia. It had been a few days since he had talked to Felmenia about Suimei. He wanted to know if there was any change in the situation, however....

“A-about, Suimei-dono...?”

Felmenia made a bewildered expression at the topic well beyond her expectations. Her voice somewhat betrayed her but it seems the King did not notice.

“That's right. Ever since then, what sort of movement has that young man made? You have been continuing to monitor him have you not?”

“A-about that... Um.”

“Felmenia?”

Felmenia averted her gaze for some reason while stumbling over her words. It was completely different from when she was talking about the hero just a moment ago. The King felt there was definitely something wrong with her. If it was the same girl as usual, she would act with open dignity. Even though she was young, no matter the situation or foe, she would never let her composure crumble. However currently there was no sense of this at all.

“Ah, uh...”

“What's wrong? Don't tell me something happened?”

“No, that's, umm...”

The King had asked her a second time, but Felmenia was still unable to speak as she stirred around restlessly while evading the question. After paying attention, he noticed she had begun sweating. He then repeated the question once more, however this time in a strict tone.

“Answer me Felmenia. If you remain silent then this discussion will not proceed you know? The things that have happened since then, that you have seen since then, you will speak of them without concealing anything.”

However Felmenia still did not reply. Instead she bowed down further with her brow pushed to the floor.

“Y-Your Majesty! Just for this matter please, please forgive me!”

“Are you saying you will not speak?”

“... Yes. As foolish as it is, it is exactly as you say.”

“Why?”

“Regarding that, for my lack of virtue, I also have nothing that I can offer...”

“Mu...”

At her constant refusal, the King unintentionally let out a groan. Felmenia was giving her firm refusal to the King's request while completely prostrated.

She was being unusually obstinate. Just why was she going so far to avoid this topic? No, it should be obvious. The King had previously declared what could not be done, and now that she had done it she did not want to speak of it. The King was able to see through her on this matter. She was surely thinking of the punishment that would obviously befall her for ignoring his orders. In that case her silence was a form of self-defence to avoid that punishment. Be that is it may, the King's next actions were definitive.

“... I believe I had said that it could not be done, Felmenia. However, from the looks of it you have taken action against Suimei-dono have you not? Am I wrong?”

The King had raised his voice considerably. As if she was a small animal discovered by her natural enemy, Felmenia gave a startled jump while still prostrate. It seemed that she was fearing the punishment the King would deliver here. She had great wisdom, but to think she would not be able to foresee this turn of events was both unexpected and disappointing. However no matter how much she shook in fear, the King had his duty. Having grasped the situation, he passed down his judgment.

“Speak. Before I pass down your punishment, I will properly hear everything that has transpired. We cannot begin until you do so.”

“... P-Please your Majesty. I beg of you... I beg of you for mercy.”

“There is no need to become so obstinate. I had already expected you to oppose my orders. Resign yourself and hold nothing back.”

“Y-Your Majesty...”

“I will hear no more excuses, Felmenia...?”

Paying close attention, the King noticed that the normally dignified girl had tears in her eyes. Just how long had it been since he had seen her cry. It must have been all the way back to when she was still a little girl and attended her first evening ball. She became separated from her father Earl Stingray and her mother the Countess and wandered around lost in confusion. Her behaviour was strange.

“... Why do you not speak?”

“...”

Felmenia did not answer. She only hung her head down and gazed at the floor. At this silence King Almadious came across a certain thought. Just why would the girl not speak? Why was she being so obstinate in her refusal? He did not know for sure, however he had come up with a plan and changed his approach.

“... Felmenia. I will ask you questions from here on.”

“But your Majesty...”

“Listen to me Felmenia. Ready? To affirm my questions, remain silent just as you have to answer. To deny them shake your head. Understood?”

At the King's command, Felmenia made no refusal and remained silent. And so the King began his interrogation one question at a time.

“Within the last few days, did you take some sort of action against Suimei-dono?”

“...”

Silence. It was a hit. However this was within the King's expectations.

“Well then, was it a verbal warning?”

This time Felmenia shook her head. Then...

“Was it by force?”

“...”

Another hit. It was by force, surely it only went as far as scaring him as a light punishment. The King believed he understood Felmenia quite well, he didn't think it was possible but...

“At that time, did you injure Suimei-dono?”

To injure, the King realized he had chosen the wrong words and was about to correct himself, but Felmenia shook her head.

“... Wait. Did you intend to injure him?”

“ ... ”

The King was at a slight loss for words at Felmenia's silence. This was definitely surprising. His surprise was not rooted in the fact the Felmenia had used force. It was because even though she held the intent to harm him, even as the top-ranked mage in the country holding the power of a Court Mage, she was unable to harm Suimei. This meant that a single man who had not received divine protection from the hero summoning, a mage who had not received any power from the Goddess or the elements, had come out completely unharmed after confronting the one named the White Flame. As the King heard the sound of his own swallowing, he continued his interrogation.

“... In that case I will ask. Felmenia, were you defeated?”

“ ... ”

Silence, therefore an affirmation. There was no more doubt. Felmenia had struck against Suimei on her own. The result was the taste of tragic defeat.

“... And at that time, Suimei-dono had taken grasp of a weakness of yours.

Because of that, you are unable to speak of anything to me. Is that right?”

“...”

He was right. As the King had guessed Felmenia's mouth had been sealed because of a weakness. Even though the person in question could neither hear nor see anything happening in this place, she still held fast to her agreement with Suimei. This must be because Felmenia and Suimei were both followers of the path of magic. The King himself had only touched lightly upon magic, so it was hard for him to imagine just what sort of agreement the two came upon.

“... Uuu, uu. Guuu... Your Majesty. My deepest apologies... On top of ignoring your orders, I'm being disloyal only to preserve myself. This Felmenia will accept any punishment that you, that you will...”

“It's fine. You have already received your punishment from Suimei-dono. From here I would just be whipping a corpse. I have no punishment to bestow on you.”

“Your Majesty...”

Felmenia was extremely dispirited at the regret towards her indiscretion as she let out more tears. To her the fight with Suimei must have been truly devastating for it to bring her down to this state. This was punishment enough. Anymore would simply wipe out any pride that was left in her. One of the King's worries had vanished. However it was too soon to be optimistic. Instead of his old worries, a new anxiety had now gripped him.

“... Felmenia. I cannot leave this case as it is. After this, I am thinking of summoning Suimei-dono to the audience chamber.”

“Your Majesty, to summon Suimei-dono... Just what do you...?”

“Isn't it obvious? As long as I cannot ask you, I will have to ask Suimei-dono. There's also the case of your weakness. I ought to remove any discord between us and that man.”

“It-it cannot be your Majesty! Suimei-dono isn't that kind of halfhearted— Ah, gu, AAAAAAAAAAAH!?”

The irregularity had occurred just as Felmenia voiced her objection. She had suddenly begun screaming while gripping her heart in pain.

“Felmenia!? What's wrong!? Felmenia!”

The King stood from his throne on reflex at the sudden event. Felmenia's suffering was just that irregular. However her writhing pain did not seem to last long as it soon subsided. Soon after her screaming had also calmed down. Felmenia once more bowed down to the King.

“Haa, haa... To have shown you this kind of disgrace, please forgive... Ku.”

“Just what is wrong? Could it be some sort of disease?”

“No...”

She had said it wasn't a disease but from that level of suffering there's no way it was nothing at all. Her beautiful face had been covered in cold sweat and all colour had been drained away from it. It was the deathly pale look of a corpse. The obvious answer would be a disease, but the King had never heard of her catching any sort of illness. He recalled the order of events once more. Just a moment ago, Felmenia gripped her heart in pain. Surely her heart was the source of the pain. It had happened while she was talking, in the middle of

voicing her objection. She had begun talking about Suimei, who she had refused to talk about up to that point. Felmenia had said earlier that she was acting to preserve herself. If one were to guess from that flow...

“Perhaps, was the suffering just now your weakness...?”

“...”

“Is it magic?”

“...”

Felmenia did not give an answer. No, she could not answer because of her weakness. The King could barely see the expression on her face, but from what he could see it was if she was full of regret at her own foolish self. There was no more for the King to ask her.

“I understand. Felmenia. You may leave everything to me.”

“Your Majesty?”

“Just as I said before, I will summon Suimei-dono here.”

“B-But!”

“It's fine. I will take all responsibility. You will—”

From here, King Almadious gave his orders to the mage who had fallen under the curse of the magician.



The King had finished his business with Felmenia and it was now late in the evening in Camellia's audience chamber. He heard the sound of the door opening. The one who was revealed as the door opened was Suimei Yakagi. He was the friend of the hero Reiji, the one Felmenia had said was a mage from another world. At a glance the young man seemed completely ordinary. He took a bow before entering and walked in towards the King. The atmosphere about him had not changed at all compared to the first time he had been called to the audience chamber, however he was wearing different clothing this time. It was a refined outfit that looked to be quite a gem. Suimei knelt down in a slightly awkward manner, perhaps this was due to his unfamiliarity with this sort of occasion.

“I have come forth at the directions of your messenger.”

“I apologize for the summons at such a time in the evening. It might seem inappropriate as you have already greeted me so politely, but today there are just the two of us present. I would like you to be at ease without humbling yourself so.”

“...”

“Suimei-dono. Is that alright?”

“... Yes.”

Suimei paused a bit before accepting and raised his face. His expression was still a little stiff. Before moving onto the main topic the King began inquiring about his clothing.

“I am not familiar with that outfit. What is it?”

“It is clothing from the other world that I had brought with me. It was in the bag

that I had with me, one of the few personal possessions I was able to bring to this world.”

“It gives off a sense of refinement far above the clothes that Hero-dono and yourself usually wear.”

“In that world this would be considered formal attire. They are clothes most suitable for this kind of occasion.”

His black pants did not have a single crease, the contrast between the black, sword-like cloth hanging from his neck and the pure white shirt behind it gave off an indescribable sense of refinement.

“Umu. It suits you well.”

“Thank you very much.”

Suimei expressed his thanks as he straightened out his clothing while still kneeling down and readjusted his posture. For a single moment, it seemed as if his awkwardness up until now had completely vanished. Suimei suddenly bowed his head down.

“Though it is a little late, I must apologize for the unsightly behaviour I showed the other day.”

Suimei gave a humble apology for his actions the other day in the audience chamber. On that day, when he had heard that he could not return home from the King's mouth, he had completely lost his composure. It was a very natural reaction. The moment he heard this information, he stood and yelled abusive words. Don't fuck with me. Unbelievable. If you can't return us then don't call

us. As if a switch had suddenly turned on, he spoke everything that was on his mind. The surrounding crowd became enraged at the disrespectful behaviour, but such was the situation. The King had managed to calm everyone down, but did not expect that Suimei would apologize for the whole affair here.

“... Aah, no, umu. It is fine. Your feelings were only natural. We had arbitrary summoned you here without the ability to send you back after all. You do not have a single reason to apologize. Please raise your head.”

“In that case...”

Suimei raised his head as the King honestly spoke of his indiscretion. From his expression, regardless of who was at fault during the racket in the audience chamber at the time, Suimei could tell that the King was simply worried. Suimei then pushed the conversation onward.

“You had said that you had wanted to speak with me privately...”

“Umu. There was something that I had to ask Suimei-dono no matter what.”

“... Haa.”

Suimei had slightly knit his brows as if he was troubled, was this his true expression?

“I would like to ask Suimei about the matter regarding Felmenia.”

“About Felmenia... san? If I remember correctly that is the name of the one teaching magic to Reiji and Mizuki. What about her?”

“She had previously mentioned that she witnessed you wandering around the

castle.”

The King brought up the matter he had heard from Felmenia earlier in response to Suimei transparently avoiding the topic at hand. Suimei returned a bitter smile just as if an embarrassing side of him had been exposed.

“Ah,ahaha... I heard that I was free to look around the castle all I wanted. I was wandering around as a diversion but did I cause some sort of inconvenience?”

“Umu. There are no problems regarding that matter. Those were my orders after all. Naturally, there will be no punishment.”

“Then, just what?”

“No, that is.”

“...?”

Suimei was putting on a bewildered expression. However this was not his true appearance. Upon hearing Felmenia's name, it seemed he had realized the King's intent and planned on playing dumb. Now that he thought of it, this was also the case when he first called out to Suimei. Ever since he was called out, Suimei had been playing his hand cautiously. If he was Suimei, he would also do the same. In other words, this was a sort of threat due to his power. He was the mage who had defeated Felmenia, there was nothing they could do to overpower him. It was quite simple. Seeing as he was not taking any action, he was planning to end the matter by simply pretending none of it had happened. This was the implication behind his words and actions. 'If you shut up and keep silent I will do nothing. So leave it be.' The one in danger was the King. Despite that he decided to take a step forwards into that dangerous territory.

“... What exactly have you done to Felmenia?”

“I don't understand what you are implying.”

“Suimei-dono. There is no way that you do not understand. Speak hone— “

Before he could finish, the King's muscles had quivered as his skin became covered in goosebumps. Suimei had let out a cold gaze that could raise the hairs across his whole body. His gaze was partially concealed behind his bangs, but it still struck fear into King's heart.

“... With all due respect your Majesty. Is it truly alright for you to go beyond this point?”

It couldn't be helped that the King had become at a loss for words. Suimei had spoken in a sharp tone completely differently from how he had been carrying himself up until this point. This was a warning to see if he truly had the resolution to continue.

“... Suimei-dono. I want to hear it.”

At these words, Suimei abruptly stood up straight and flung his arm behind him. Out of nowhere, a black coat had appeared on Suimei and fluttered behind him with a clear sound. The King did not understand just what Suimei had done, but could guess that this was probably Suimei's magic. Suimei's expression had also completely changed and did not leave any hint of the face that he had held up to this point. His gentle gaze had transformed into a sharp one. A deep gaze that could swallow one into darkness. A proud look that the King had witnessed many times characteristic of mages. Normally his behaviour would cause an uproar in the audience chamber, however there was nobody present to do so. The King had been captivated at the first glimpse of Suimei's mage-like attitude. Suimei spoke as if letting out a sigh.

“... My goodness. There are no traces of that woman having kicked the bucket, yet you seem to know that much huh.”

“As I thought you...”

“Ah, that's exactly right. From the moment I arrived in this world I was exposed as a magician by that woman... That woman should be completely unable to speak of the matter, so why does his Majesty the King know that I have done something?”

“I had asked her of it. If she could not speak of it, I had told her to remain silent to confirm my suspicions.”

At the simple explanation, Suimei had come to an understanding and spoke.

“I see. I did not take that into consideration. Certainly the covenant binding that woman only prevented her from speaking of the matter. If she did not speak nothing would happen.”

Suimei spoke in a gentle voice as he pondered about the matter, yet suddenly returned a sharp gaze to the King.

“Nevertheless, why have you called me here? I hold that woman's life within my hand. If you understand this, then surely you understand just how dangerous it is to call me here without a single guard.”

Almadious certainly understood just how dangerous it was to call Suimei here. He understood yet did not prepare any sort of countermeasures. There was a

reason he did not do so.

“... Certainly I had my concerns. However with regards to Suimei-dono and Hero-dono, you are both guests that I have called to this land. No matter what has happened, this fact remains true. It was my fault. I had taken this world's problems and unreasonably pushed them onto those from a completely different world who knew nothing of ours after all.”

This was the reason the King could not bear his fangs towards them. However this was truly just for his own convenience. Suimei could not speak as he scrutinized the King's words.

“...”

“Suimei-dono. Even though I called you out to this completely unknown world, though I shut my eyes to the behaviour of my people towards you, and on top of that to impertinently ask more of you... I would still like to hear you speak.”

“Why do you want to hear of it so badly? Even if you heard nothing of it there should be no burden on your Majesty right?”

“That certainly may be true. However, if I pretended I had saw nothing and she ends up losing her life, it would only fill me with regret.”

“... Even towards that self-conceited woman?”

“That's right. She is my retainer. Thus I must protect her.”

Suimei let out a sigh before replying.

“So long as she doesn't speak there is no threat to her life. This is absolute.

Even I do not wish to needlessly trample on the lives of others. With this the conversation is over.”

“No, not yet.”

“I do not believe there is anything further to speak of?”

Even if the important matter at hand had been discussed. The King still had things that he must hear from Suimei.

“Suimei-dono. I know nothing about you. As the one responsible for summoning you, I would like to hear about you. Just what kind of person you are, what are your plans from here on? I want to have this sort of frank conversation with you. If possible, I would like you to speak without any reservations.”

These were his true feelings. It was true that if both he and Felmenia sealed their mouths, the previous matter would come to an end. The only ones who would know of Suimei would be just those two. In that case their everyday life from before would just return to normal. They would just need to send out the hero to defeat the Demon Lord. However that would be like discarding his responsibility for summoning them to this land. He could not ignore the ones that he had summoned forth after throwing their lives into disarray. It was simply his moral compass which drove him to do everything he could towards these people that he had wronged.

“... Of course, I don't intend to ask this of you unreasonably. If Suimei-dono does not wish to speak of it then I will not force the matter, this is all for my own convenience. Even knowing all this, please...”

Still sitting atop his throne, the King bowed his head. This was unbecoming of him as the King of a nation. This was his way of making it apparent that he was not simply being prideful about the matter. After a short while, he raised his head. What came into his vision was a face of complete shock. Just why would he do such a thing? Why would he go so far? A surprised face that expressed these feelings. As if completely giving off, Suimei let out a sigh and replied.

“Can I take this as your true intentions without a shadow of doubt?”

“Aah, these are unmistakably my true feelings.”

Suimei suddenly corrected his posture at these words, and then...

“I must apologize for the impoliteness of my arrogant manner just now. Please ask all that you will of me. I shall answer all that I can within the extent of my knowledge.”

It could still be said that Suimei was being impolite by not kneeling down. However, the prideful attitude he had been demonstrating to this point had completely vanished, his tone had also completely changed. It was most likely that this was his true self. Not his usual self whenever he was with the hero Reiji and Mizuki. Not the prideful self which he used when confronting his enemies as he just had. It was his self as a single mage, Suimei Yakagi. Thus, revealing himself like this was the greatest respect he could show.

“Just what kind of person are you?”

“In the other world I am called a magician. Something like a scholar in search of the mysteries of the world. I believe it isn't all that different from those that

you call mages.”

“A magician...”

The King repeated the word. To Suimei who had not heard it spoken even once ever since he had been summoned to this world, it was somehow refreshing to hear. He was an existence different from mages, and for the first time that fact had finally reached his ears.

“Why do you hide this fact? Setting us aside, you hide it even from Hero-dono and Mizuki-dono.”

“In the other world, unlike this one, a power known as science was used to develop the world. This fact you may have already heard from Reiji. Over there, magic was something that was driven into the underworld. Magicians became a target for elimination by those in power. Therefore, a magician who reveals himself publicly does not exist. If they revealed themselves, they would simply be seen as going against the flow of the world and crushed. The reason I conceal the fact that I'm a magician is also because of this.”

“So that is why Hero-dono and Mizuki-dono are unaware. As so when Felmenia had discovered your identity...”

“Yes. I did not have complete conviction that she had sensed my magic at the time. I was worried whether she had known or not. After investigating the matter, I had prepared a plan to lure her out. I had sowed the seeds myself, but to think she would start by bringing out such a dangerous automaton... well, I took it as her intent to carry this out without any further discussions.”

There was one thing that Suimei had mentioned that bothered the King.

“An automaton?”

“Yes. It was in the shape of an armoured cavalryman. It was quite well made. I had been attacked by it and destroyed the spell which controlled it.”

“Mage Slamas' golem huh...”

The King guessed at the identity of the golem that attacked Suimei. Within the entire castle, the only golem was the one Slamas had made. If it was a doll that could move on its own then there was no other creation that fit the description. Slamas' golem was well made, and powerful. To think that Felmenia had brought it out. The King had caught a glimpse of Felmenia's stubborn behaviour before she was brought down by Suimei.

“However, I had also said this to Felmenia, but were you not too quick in resolving this matter with force?”

The dispute had escalated into a fight in a somewhat irrational matter. There should still have been room for discussion. This applied to Felmenia who played her hand first, but it also applied to Suimei. Suimei replied with an honest expression.

“I cannot deny that I had gotten a little carried away. However I am also one who walks the path of magic. Magicians have a magician's style of dealing with matters. To one who bears their fangs towards them, revenge can only be carried out with violence. Also, I will admit I may have been venting my anger about being forcefully summoned here.”

Suimei gave out a sigh as he laughed as someone befitting his age with those last words.

“... What a brat.”

“Magicians are just that sort of existence. They are selfish beings who are only interested in chasing after their own goals. It's normal not to think about others. Besides, I don't think your Majesty is in a position to say such a thing after you had shut your eyes as it was all happening?”

“That's true.”

The King was also partially responsible as he had been too lenient with Felmenia. He wasn't in a position to criticize Suimei about acting rashly as he had also left Felmenia to her own devices despite knowing what she would do. If Suimei had no self control, he could use his magic to commit all sorts of crimes behind their backs. He would be able to satisfy his greed with complete freedom. Despite this he had shut himself inside his room and quietly avoided causing any sort of inconvenience to others. During his investigations, the repository, throne room and treasury where countless important items were stored had all been left untouched. Even the way he had dealt with Felmenia, the method used still had a hint of mercy. He didn't know how it worked in the other world, but after setting up that kind of golem to attack him, they wouldn't be able to complain even if he had killed Felmenia outright. Suimei then suddenly turned his attention to one of the pillars at his side. He couldn't possibly...

“... That's how it is. I was just venting out my anger at whatever was in front of me. You can be relieved. I have no intention of ordering you to do anything else.”

These words were not directed towards the King. They were definitely meant for Felmenia's ears. It was in fact true that she was standing behind the pillar.

“...”

With a face filled with surprise, Felmenia stepped out from behind the pillar. As if Suimei was not interested at all, he simply glanced at her and returned his focus on the King who spoke to him.

“Since when did you notice?”

“Let me ask you in response. Why would you think that I would not notice?”

“...”

This was certainly true. Suimei was a master capable of surpassing Felmenia. It was only natural to expect him to notice immediately instead of thinking they could fool him.

“Suimei-dono. This is...”

“Even if you don't say it I understand. I was suspicious when you had said it would be just the two of us. When I think about how you treat her as your precious retainer, about how much you care for her, I can understand your actions.”

“I'm sorry.”

The King gave an honest apology. Felmenia was not present as a guard, the King had asked her to stay there for her own sake. If he knew Felmenia was present, there were things that Suimei would not talk about. The King would remain oblivious to the matters concerning her. Thus he had her hide. Despite seeing through it completely, Suimei still spoke of everything. Felmenia called out to Suimei with a pale face.

“S-Suimei-dono...”

“I said I wouldn't do anything, don't just suddenly turn pale. You truly are pathetic. If you are also a magician then you should stand tall up until the point that you die. Are you not a Court Mage of this country?”

“Auu...”

Suimei threw out these bitter words without even turning towards her. Felmenia could only stand there dumbfounded with a tear forming in her eyes. She had nothing she could say in return to him. At this silence, the King continued with his questions.

“The reason why you are investigating the summoning circle is as I thought...”

“I believe I said that I wanted to go back. There are things that I must do in that world. Also...”

“Also?”

“... If the time ever comes that Reiji and Mizuki wish to return, then I must be prepared to show them the road back. I'm not accompanying my friends even though they are in danger. As a magician, this is all I can do for them instead.”

Suimei had leaked out his surprising intentions. Naturally his goal was something that he was doing for himself. He had said that he wanted to return after all. However he was also thinking about his friends. However the more surprising fact here was...

“Are you able to analyze it, that circle?”

“Given enough time I can to a certain extent. It isn't impossible.”

“I-Is that true...!?”

He had just declared that he could unravel the secrets of the summoning circle which nobody had been able to do no matter how much they studied it. The summoning circle had been passed down for generations since time immemorial. The exact process for drawing it and chanting the spell was passed down to the finest detail, but the spell was for too complicated for anybody to understand. They simply repeated the recorded process. Not a single person had been able to grasp the structure of the spell itself.

“It was worth studying spiritual magic and necromancy. I never expected it to come up in this sort of place.”

If he was so confident of this fact, then there was something else on the King's mind.

“However, if you are thinking so much about Reiji-dono, why do not speak of any of this to them? Even if they knew, if it was Hero-dono...”

“Your Majesty. In the case that they discover my lineage and return to our world, there is the possibility of them coming to harm.”

Suimei replied instantly. He was worried about their well being.

“If they keep it to themselves then it is fine is it not?”

“Your Majesty. I don't know how it is in this world, but that world is a den of

vipers.”

“A den of vipers?”

“Yes. In that world, even if one were to seal their mouths, the simple fact that they hold the knowledge would put them in danger. Not only are there spells to read or steal ones thoughts, there are spells to make one speak their mind against their will. When it comes to magic there are an uncountable number of ways of getting that information. Because of this I cannot carelessly reveal my identity. There are madmen there that would point their blades at those who simply know of the existence of magicians.”

“The magic of your world is truly that sinful?”

“Yes.”

The King had thought that if Suimei truly held Reiji as a friend close to his heart, then he would honestly speak of it. However it seemed that would not be possible. That just showed how much the path of magic in their world and his differed as the other world' magic was truly shrouded in an unspeakable darkness. They had many enemies. Danger followed them at every corner and they had to hide away from the eyes of others to continue their path. Suimei's prudence seemed very understandable now that the King knew of this.

“When it comes time that they want to return, I will eventually have to speak of this fact to them... It is a difficult topic after having hidden it from them for so long however.”

“I can imagine.”

When that time came, he would have no choice but to explain the teleportation circle. There was also the matter of teaching them the laws of magic back in their world. However it was still a difficult topic to bring up.

“... So that means you will truly not go with them.”

“I had said this before and I will say it again, I do not want to dive into anything reckless.”

“To you who had defeated Felmenia, I do not think it is such a reckless thing, don't you think? Also if it is Suimei-dono, won't you be of great help to Hero-dono?”

“That may be so, at any rate it will be unnecessary.”

“Why would you say that?”

“We had quarrelled when it had come about at the time, but Reiji is definitely not such a superficial man. He often does crazy things, but he still always has sound judgment, never forgets to be careful and on top of that he now holds the terrifying power of a hero. Therefore I have nothing to worry about. I won't say that he'll definitely succeed in subjugating the Demon Lord, but I'm sure he won't easily be killed.”

“I see.”

Suimei had spoken of this with a smile on his face. It showed just how much he trusted Reiji. Even though he quietly added on, “It'll also be good for him to experience something painful once in a while,” had been because he was truly thinking of them. It was not because he truly wanted something bad to happen to them. The King then brought the topic back to the original topic at hand.

“I will be repeating myself once more, but about Felmenia.”

“Just as I had said earlier, as long as she doesn't talk nothing will happen... Now that I think about it, it has gone far enough.”

Suimei pulled out a pure white piece of paper from the air. The King could only see it as a completely normal piece of paper whose only outstanding quality was its pure white colour like that of fresh snow. However upon closer inspection, there were letters written upon it alongside a seal of blood. Suimei took the paper into both hands as if to tear it in two.

“S-Suimei-dono!? W-Wait— “

Felmenia had gone pale and let out a shout to try and restrain Suimei, but he would hear none of it. Without any mercy, the sound of paper tearing filled the air. Felmenia fell to her knees as she was swallowed in emotion as the sound of paper tearing repeated until the paper had been reduced to scraps and fallen to the audience chamber floor. With a snap of his fingers, the paper scraps were engulfed in crimson flames and vanished completely.

“Ah...”

“Court mage. With this the constraints I have placed on you have disappeared. Make sure to show gratitude to his Majesty for putting his life on the line for you today.”

Felmenia was only staring into space completely dumbfounded. The King turned towards Suimei.

“Is that alright?”

“Your Majesty wished for us to have no ill feelings between us did you not? This was all that was standing between us. It is no longer something that is

needed between your Majesty and myself. However, concerning Reiji and Mizuki, I will have you not talk to them about this, not allow it to be talked to them about this, and to not take an action where they may perceive this matter. That is the only promise that I wish you to keep. Surely I don't even need to ask if this is alright or not but..."

"Understood. I will do as you see fit."

The King agreed to Suimei's request. Suimei had yielded so much to him already, there was no way he would refuse. And so, the King asked about one more thing that was on his mind.

"What will you do after this? I don't mind if you want to stay in the castle until you figure a way back but..."

Suimei was a guest that the King had forcefully summoned from another world. His obligation to Suimei was something that would never disappear. Until Suimei completed the teleportation circle to return it stood to reason that the King would look after him and allow him to live in the castle. However this only applied if Suimei himself wanted to stay. If this was not the case, the King had something that he must ask Suimei. Suimei shook his head.

"No, after Reiji and Mizuki depart from the castle, I will also leave."

"What do you intend to do by leaving the castle?"

"I'm thinking of going to the Nelferia Empire. The empire is adjacent to three other countries making it a key point in the land. It is the best place for me to gather information and materials."

The King let out a groan at Suimei's words. It was true that the Nelferia Empire was adjacent to three other countries including Astel. It was a very important trade route. Compared to Astel the circulation of goods was far more developed. Due to the a stable alliance with Astel, crossing the border would be a simple matter. If Suimei required goods or information that could not be acquired in Astel then it truly was a suitable choice. Frankly the King did not want such a talented man as Suimei to leave the country. However it was also impossible for him to restrict Suimei's actions.

“... I see. In that case if you have anything you need speak freely. If it is within my power I will grant you whatever you wish, though this may seem just a meagre offering for you after all that has happened.”

The King expressed his wish to support Suimei even if he left. However Suimei did not agree with him.

“I appreciate your consideration. However please do not concern yourself with me.”

“Why is that? From here you will be headed off to lands completely unknown to you. Do you not need any form of assistance?”

Suimei was from another world. He should be unfamiliar with the culture and customs here. He also had nobody to depend on. In that case he should require some form of aid. But...

“It is fine. After being unable to endure life in the castle, I will simply leave at my own convenience. You cannot treat someone like that with such leniency. His Majesty should worry about his own reputation instead of of mine.”

“However...”

“Thanks to the big fuss we had here last time and shutting myself in my room, rumours about me had gotten considerably bad. If you were to give your support to someone like that, certainly there would be some who would praise you for showing such leniency, but the ones who complain would be in the vast majority. Such a thing would be quite inconvenient for your Majesty.”

It was exactly as Suimei said. If he left the castle, taking into the account his outward appearance up to this point, no matter what the King did rumours would spread about Suimei arbitrarily fleeing from the pressure. If the King gave out any form of assistance, it was inevitable that dissatisfaction with his actions would spread. Just why would the King go so far for someone who does nothing? He's caring too much for such a useless existence. These sorts of foul rumours were inevitable.

“Even so, if I said I didn't mind such rumours?”

“I appreciate your concern. However, I won't hear more of this.”

“Mu...”

The King was at a loss for words at Suimei's sudden harsh objection. Suimei was being obstinate. He wanted the King to just leave him be. It seemed like baseless self-confidence but he certainly seemed to have the vigour to back it up. Exactly what was Suimei gazing at with those eyes? It was not the King, he was staring much further off into the distance. It was the gaze of a man who was prepared to challenge the difficulties that would cross his path in the future. He was giving off a strong pressure that was uncharacteristic of a young man his age.

“... While I live in this world, without exception I will meet obstacles that will

stand before me like a wall. No matter how large, how tall these walls are, I will overcome them with ease. That is what it means to call oneself a magician. I am a magician, Yakagi Suimei. I am the one who will fight against the difficulties known as the mysteries of this world. Thus, your Majesty, I will say it one last time. Your thoughts concerning my safety will be entirely sufficient. I will gratefully accept them.”

The young man who declared this with severity did not show any opening or weaknesses. He had broken the deadlock with the King by simply stating it was impossible. He stood like a rock to the waves that would look to displace his ideals. As the King thought, this young man was on an entirely different level. He was genius who definitely should not have been dragged into the hero summoning. After a short silence, Suimei broke his severe expression and spoke in a self-deprecating voice.

“... Though I acted cool, it isn't something I should be saying as someone who refused to face a fight because they did not want to die.”

“If you put it like that, those words apply to all of us. We who had cowered in fear at the threat of the Demon Lord and pushed everything on people who were completely unrelated to the matter are no better. That of course, includes myself...”

The only ones qualified to complain about not taking part in the Demon Lord's subjugation, were the ones taking part in the subjugation themselves. It isn't something that anyone who was hiding in a safe place should speak of.

Suimei was departing the castle to face an entirely different challenge. Nobody was qualified to condemn him for it. As expected, to this young man who would push forwards towards an impossible goal, just how much had they hindered him by calling him here. The King knew it must have been a serious blow to Suimei. The words Suimei spoke in this chamber at that time truly hurt the King's heart. This just showed how much sympathy he held for Suimei. Even though they were separated in age enough to be parent and child, he still understood Suimei's feelings.

“Did you still have anything you would like to ask me?”

“Then...”

The King took Suimei up on his offer and continued to ask him many questions about himself and about Reiji and Mizuki. They did not talk only about things related to magicians, but also about the frivolous life he had with his friends.



Some time had passed since the King's conversation with Suimei had begun.

“... Is it alright for me to ask something this time?”

“What is it?”

Suimei shifted his gaze to the side to the King's response.

“No, not to his Majesty.”

“...? To me?”

“Yeah. To you. If I remember correctly, you said that you had no intention to kill me right?”

The King did not know when the two had talked of such matters, but it seemed that Felmenia knew well.

“Y-yeah. That's true. I swear upon the Goddess Alshuna.”

Suimei nodded his head as Felmenia swore upon the goddess without asking for further confirmation.

“Those words piqued my curiosity you see. I did some investigating afterwards and found out something quite interesting.”

“Something, interesting?”

“Yeah. It's something that concerns yourself as well... Or rather it's more appropriate to say that you are a victim, so how about it? Would you like to look into it with me?”

Suimei put on an evil smile as if he had just thought of some amusing plan and spoke of the things he had discovered during his investigation.

Chapter 4 - For the Sake of the One I Aspire to Be

On this day, within a grand corridor in Camellia Castle, someone was in a hurry. He was a mage-like man wearing a fine robe. This was the Court Mage who had previously reported on Suimei's activities to Felmenia. He was headed towards his own room after a convening of Court Mages in the audience chamber. The lean figure of the man was walking at a calm gait. It was as if he was anticipating something or that he could not hold back his joy as he was urged on forwards.

“Mu....?”

In the middle of his joyous return, the man spotted something in his field of vision right in the middle of the large corridor right at its end. And as he moved his gaze upon it...

“... Reiji-sama, Mizuki. Without delay. Quickly.”

A young girl's voice entered the man's ears. He saw the edge of the training ground. There he saw the figure of the princess Titania beckoning the hero and his female friend without paying attention to her surroundings standing at the edge of the wall. It was quite strange that they were there when they were not doing any training. As the man was wondering what was going on, Reiji arrived where Titania was waiting at such a late hour.

“I-is it really alright, Tia? To do something like sneaking out of the castle arbitrarily, isn't it wrong...”

Reiji was unable to keep his composure as he questioned Titania. From his figure that was sneaking around not a single fragment of his usual heroic figure when he faced off against the Knight Captain and Court Mages could be seen.

“It's alright Reiji-sama. It isn't the first time that I've snuck out of the castle without telling anybody after all.”

“That’s not what I mean.”

“It’s alright. Just leave everything from me. We should be able to make some fun memories before our departure. I do regret that Suimei-sama will not be coming though...”

Titania cast her gaze downwards in disappointment. It seems they were planning on travelling somewhere incognito. Ever since they had been called from another world, they had not left the castle even once. Thinking that this might be too constraining for the hero and his friends, the princess was moving to lighten their hearts due to her kindness. As the man was making this conjecture, Mizuki had spotted him and began to make a flustered expression.

“T-Tia, hey...”

“What’s wrong Mizuki? Panicking like that.”

“T-That. That...”

Titania did not immediately realize what Mizuki was calling her out for, but after Mizuki pointed her finger towards the man she finally noticed. Reiji stared straight up towards the heavens making a face thinking ‘Oh Crap’. Next to him Titania let her gaze swim around.

“This is, um...”

After being discovered by someone from the castle, she was shaken and not quite sure what to do.

“Well then, I think I heard something, but is it just my imagination?”

The man turned his gaze away from the three of them and spoke out his thoughts out loud. He intended to overlook them. The three of them did not immediately understand just what was meant by the voice that was feigning ignorance. Titania was the first to realize and stepped onto the farce of a stage.

“T-that’s right. It’s just your imagination. There is nobody here at the training grounds.”

“That’s right. There’s no way I could be hearing her Highness the Princess and

Hero-dono's voices at this training ground where nobody is doing any training. It must be my imagination."

Titania let out a sigh of relieve and let her gaze fall to the ground. Reiji mimicked her actions. They seemed to have been quite shaken, but have now calmed down.

"Well then, let us depart while we still can."

"U-un. You're right. Let's go. Reiji-kun."

"Thank you very much."

Reiji gave a polite bow. The three of them cleared the wall using strengthening magic. The man made an amused face as he saw the figures of the princess and hero vanishing over the wall.

"Ku, kuku... Oh. I of all people..."

The Court Mage let out a snicker thinking back on Titania's flustered reaction. He wasn't able to hold back his feelings after something nice had happened.

"Fufufu."

The man once more began walking in a hurry while he was still in good humour. As a splendid Court Mage, he could not be caught by anyone letting out his joy like that. At the least he should do so from within his own room. Before long the man reached his destination, entered the room and shut the door behind him. This was the office that had always been appointed to him in Camellia Castle. It was kept in an orderly and neat manner just as always.

"Hmm..."

For some reason, unlike always, he could smell a fragrance filling up the entire room that had never been present before. A maid had probably burned some new aromatic incense after cleaning the room. Not only that it seemed to be quite the high quality incense.

"She certainly has quite the nice hobby..."

Thanks to the work of someone he did not necessarily know, the man's high spirits only soared to newer heights. He planned to return the favour once he had the time to... Nevertheless, this scent was certainly stimulating his mood. With each sniff his spirit would become stimulated, it was to the point where he felt quite pleasant. It was as if his joy was being multiplied several times over.

"Ku, kuku..."

Thanks to the devilish aroma, the man was no longer able to suppress his emotions. As he stood by the window, the wall known as patience had burst and his joy had transformed into a loud laughter.

"Fu, fu, fuHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!! That stupid little girl Stingray, did you learn your lesson!? Screw the White Flame! Just from being able to use magic a little skillfully you sure got quite cocky didn't you you stupid little girl!? This is what you get for making a fool of me in front of her Highness the Princess and the hero! HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!"

The reason for the man's great joy was because at the meeting held between Court Mages in the King's audience chamber, the verdict of Felmenia's dismissal had been passed down. Previously, the role of teaching the hero magic was stolen from him by Felmenia. On top of that she humiliated him publicly... It was just a one sided grudge from his end, but since his selfish wish had been granted, he was unable to stop laughing. After having laughed out all the air in his lungs, he took a deep breath and once again began talking to himself.

"... Fu. Still, that stupid little girl sure got deceived quite easily huh. By no means would that hero's friend without a single fragment of a backbone ever hold a thought of harming his Majesty the King. But to think with just some simple magic and cajolery she would meet my expectations and harm that kid... For someone who was not able to properly assess the situation like that, that stupid little girl's appointment as a Court Mage was far too hasty after all."

Looking at the results it was just as he said, the appointment was too hasty. Felmenia was just that much of simpleton. That's why she had judgment passed down on her in the audience chamber... The King had said that Felmenia had gone off to motivate Suimei, who had refused to take part in the upcoming fight with the Demon Lord, with some rough words. However she had gone too far and ended up injuring him. The hidden truth behind it was that Felmenia wasn't

going to motivate him, she had gone to use that magic she had created, that power filled with lies and deceit, to kill that boy who held no power at all.

The man was being quite talkative. It was as if he was being compelled to speak of the truth behind everything that had happened. He himself could also not understand why he had become so passionate about talking to himself about it.

“Fu, fu. However to think that she was not just just given a punishment but a full dismissal as a Court Mage. I would have been glad if she had just been taught a lesson, but his Majesty had been quite strict in his judgment. I guess he was just that much more angered after he had shown such favour to that stupid little girl Stingray.”

The man still continued to talk to himself. He had a slight problem with this fact, but his extreme sense of joy completely trumped that small thought. It just didn't matter anymore. And so...

“Nevertheless the face she was making in the audience chamber was just...! When his Majesty the King declared her dismissal in front of all the Court Mages her face as she sunk into despair was just...”

“Was just what?”

“It was just such a thrilling thing to see!”

“Hahaha. Certainly she was getting a little too cocky after all.”

“That's right! She was just staring down from her high horse. But now she's... Ku, HAHAAHAHA!”

“You sure do seem to be enjoying yourself.”

“Of course I am! I can only enjoy myself in this situation right!? I knocked off that impudent, stupid little girl Stingray who didn't know her place in the world from her seat as a Court Mage after all! Do you understand? My pure joy... Ah?”

He was overjoyed at his own victory. That's why he had just continued talking in a friendly manner with the voice that slipped in out of nowhere. Finally he noticed the strangeness of the situation and turned around completely

dumbfounded... As he looked behind him, sitting down on the couch in his office, was a single man dressed in unfamiliar black clothes covered in darkness. The man crossed his legs, and began speaking with an expression as he was scornfully laughing at him.

“Eh? Aren’t you going to continue? You still have things that you want to say? Right?”

He spoke in a familiar tone. Like a child looking forward to the next chapter of the story but then switched to a much more evil expression. This was his true intention, like a devil he revealed them to the man before him. Soon, the sunlight broke through the window and revealed the man who had been covered in darkness.

“Y-You’re...?”

“Now then, don’t hold anything back on me mage. No... Court Mage, Sebastian Kran.”

This man was...

“S-Suimei, Yakagi...?”

He managed to mutter those words out while pointing his shaky finger at the man who had named him. In front of Sebastian Kran, Suimei stood up and gave a grand bow like an actor before speaking.

“Aah. It is a pleasure to meet you. This would be the first time that we speak face to face right?”

“Wha... What are you? Since when were you there...? No, how did you get in here?”

“How you say? I just normally opened the door and entered. Since when? Just a little before you entered the room yourself I think? Aah, that’s probably right.”

In the middle of this casual response, Sebastian recalled back to the time that he entered the room. At that time, he had been walking with a light step and opened the door. He had only been looking straight forwards and hadn’t checked the entire room, but that couch had definitely been within his field of view. Now

matter how much he thought about it, Sebastian could not recall the scene of anyone sitting on that couch at the time.

“Ridiculous, when I entered the room there wasn’t anybody...”

“There wasn’t anybody there? I’m sure you thought so. I had cast a spell that prevented you from seeing or sensing me upon the entire room after all. There’s no way you could notice.”

“What... A spell you said? Don’t tell me you can use magic...”

“Aah I can use it. Though it may not appear so I’m still a magician after all. So—”

—Herbal magic, did it feel good?

Suimei was smiling at the comedy playing before his eyes that he himself had produced. He put into words the reason why Sebastian had suddenly become so talkative.



—Herbal Magic. In ancient times it was used by shamans. From the Middle Ages to the present it was used by witches. It was a technique which used the mysteries within herbs, a magic categorized as a witch's spell.

It was possible to use magic to use the scent of the herbs, or to use the herbs themselves as a talisman, to draw out the mysteries within. In this case Suimei had used the former technique. It was a simple trap with the goal of bringing down Sebastian. After giving off his theatrical greeting, Suimei walked towards the wall. Seeing someone else strutting around his own room like they owned the place, Sebastian recalled something that he had heard earlier.

“A-A mage!? N-no there is no magic in Hero-dono’s world.”

“That’s right, the world they know of us certainly like that.”

“The world they know of?”

“Right. Well, regarding that, it isn’t something that you need to know.”

These words as Suimei slowly came out of the darkness sent shivers down Sebastian’s spine. He couldn’t understand. The hero did not know of the existence of magic beforehand. It did not seem like he knew and pretended not to either. However he was the man chosen by the Goddess and the world. The man given the destiny of a hero. In that case, there was simply no way that the wise hero would not be able to use any magic, but this completely common young man that they could find anywhere would be able to...

(Was this perhaps why Felmenia believed that Suimei meant to cause harm to his Majesty so easily? Because she knew that Suimei was a mage...)

Cold sweat began to fall down Sebastian’s cheeks. He was wondering if such a thing was possible. This unexpected event was happening after all. After enjoying the sight of Sebastian trembling for a while, Suimei leaned onto the wall and began speaking in a cold tone.

“Anyways, thank you. I had understood most of the situation right as I had begun investigating, however thanks to you I now have a full grasp on the entire situation. I had completely been used as an excuse to accomplish your goals... Ah, by the way you won’t be able to get away with just saying you know nothing about it. His Majesty the King has already grasped that there is a mastermind behind all this after all.”

“Th-that’s.”

As Sebastian began mumbling, Suimei relentlessly continued.

“That’s right, the one who played a petty trick on the automaton Stingray set up was you wasn’t it?”

“Wh-what are you...”

“I thought I already said you wouldn’t be able to get away by saying you know nothing? The one who made that thing was your teacher. Golem manipulation is your specialty isn’t it? It’s a simple trick isn’t it?”

“U...”

Sebastian was unable to form any sort of objection and Suimei fluently exposing everything before him. Suimei shrugged his shoulders and spoke up again.

“When she had suddenly tried to kill me, I had simply thought she was a completely simpleton that was harassing me after getting pissed. But you were the one who had actually gotten pissed and used your selfish unjustified resentment to frame her by creating a victim right? Do you have anything to say?”

“... What do you intend to do to me?”

“I will do nothing. The one who should do something is the one who came to the most harm because of this. Isn’t that right? What do you think?”

After Suimei asked the cautious Sebastian once, for some reason he turned to the side and asked another question.

“Just who are you...”

Before he finished speaking, he followed Suimei’s line of sight. The door to his office opened. And beyond the door a figure appeared.

“F-Felmenia Stingray!?”

The one beyond the door was in fact the young Court Mage who Sebastian had been holding an unsightly grudge against that he had caused to fall from power, Felmenia Stingray. Any man who set eyes on her would be captivated by her beauty. However this beauty was now staring at the man before her with a cold gaze filled with righteous indignation. From her mouth a voice filled with anger spilled forth.

“... To think this was your scheme all along, bastard.”

The words Felmenia spat out in a loathsome manner were vulgar. Sebastian

turned briefly towards Suimei. He had been standing off to the side with a sneer on his face.

“She’s our special guest. It’s quite the clever development right?”

“You bastard...!”

Sebastian was glaring a hole through Suimei as if to kill him, but Felmenia soon interrupted this moment.

“It’d be best for you to be quiet! The title of Court Mage does not suit a bastard like you who would cause another to fall simply for your wretched envy! I shall drag you in front of his Majesty the King and tell him everything of your damned scheming!”

“Ku!”

Felmenia spoke these brave words and advanced towards Sebastian to grab him, however he jumped over the table and ran for the exit.

“Out of the way!”

“Kya!?”

Felmenia had been in the doorway and did not expect Sebastian to resist, it took her all she had just to dodge out of the way of his ramming attack. By the time she realized just what had happened, he was already running down the corridor.

“Eh? Ah?”

Felmenia was still looking around confused as Suimei cleared up her thoughts with a troubled expression.

“... Oi oi. What the hell are you doing? He ran away you know?”

“I-I’m sorry that was inexcusable. It was just so sudden that I...”

“Sudden... You’re a mage aren’t you? Where’s your magic?”

“Ah...”

“Come on...”

Suimei let out a sigh at Felmenia's idiotic voice. He was exasperated at her sudden display of her clumsy girl style behaviour and couldn't even but his complaints into words. However he still put his thoughts into order and took action.

"Whatever, we're chasing after him."

"Yes."

The two of them took chase after Sebastian. He was already out of sight, however he was unable to hide his presence. While still in chase, Felmenia suddenly began speaking in an unusually meek voice.

"Um..."

"What's wrong?"

"I must apologize Suimei-dono. Even though I had been tricked, I had cause quite a lot of trouble for you... I want to apologize for all the impoliteness I have shown you."

"Hm? Aah, I didn't particularly pay it any mind. We had settled all of that with the fight. It all started because I was sneaking around too. I don't think you made any mistakes in finding fault with that... Well, it's that isn't it? If we're talking about being tricked that applies to me too. I magnificently went along with the plot laid out by that man after all."

"But..."

Even though he said it was fine she still seemed to want to apologize, it was a sign of her pure honesty. Suimei put on a very serious face and responded to her.

"I'm sorry. I truly went overboard with you in many ways."

"N-no! It is not something for Suimei-dono to apologize about! Not only did you permit my selfish rampage, you even prepared a way of closing the curtain without taking my life. If you apologize on top of that, I won't have anything to stand on anymore."

"..."

Suimei gave a look like he was looking at something unexpected towards Felmenia's excessively humble behaviour.

"... Is there something wrong?"

"No, I may have misunderstood you quite a bit."

"Misunderstood... is it?"

"No, I'm sorry. Seriously."

"...?"

Felmenia was curious what he meant as Suimei apologized one more time and looked at her. He did not expect her to be that sort of person. He did not think she was a bad person to begin with, however he had treated her quite badly for such a young girl even if it was for the purpose of sealing her mouth. Now that he thought back on this he had felt he may have gone too far for just venting his anger. As he apologized once more, Suimei turned towards and continued chasing Sebastian's presence.

"... Anyways, just where is that guy headed?"

"If he keeps following this path, then it would be the north wing."

"Isn't that a dead end?"

Suimei recalled the layout of the north wing to confirm, Felmenia returned him a nod.

"Yes, there are no exits. If there was something there."

"It would be the room we were summoned to..."

For some reason Suimei had a bad feeling about this.

★

Before long, the two of them arrived at the summoning ritual site making sure that they did not let him slip by them on the way and burst into the room. Their prey was crouched in the centre of the summoning circle as Felmenia yelled out

to him.

“There’s nowhere left to run!! Give it up!!”

“...”

However Sebastian remained silent. He did not even react to Felmenia’s words. This time Suimei spoke to grab his attention.

“Oi, you, why did you run away to this place?”

“Fu, fufufu...”

“What’s so funny!?”

Felmenia yelled at Sebastian who had given out a sardonic laugh. However he still did not seem to be bothered by her at all, rather it seemed that he found her anger humorous. Finally he spoke.

“Naive... Far too naive Stingray. Did you truly believe that I would run to this room without planning anything at all?”

“What?”

“Kukuku, I am also a Court Mage! I have a plan prepared to break through this exact situation! Behold!”

As he said this, Sebastian activated the summoning circle. At a few mumbled words, the summoning circle beneath his feet began to give off a dark light. The boundless dark purple light flooded the stone enclosed room. Felmenia was shocked by the sudden development.

“Wh-what are you doing!? This is the summoning circle to call heroes from other worlds you know!?”

“Precisely so! However since it is able to summon something from another world, with a slight revision it is possible to summon something other than heroes!”

“Wha... Then just what are you...?”

... planning on summoning? Were the words Felmenia was about to ask. Though after coming this far there was really need to ask .

“Isn’t it obvious that it will be something to get rid of you bastards!?”

“So that’s your intent!? You’ve revealed your true character!”

“Cease your prattling little girl! You’ve gotten cocky just because you’re a little skillful at magic. Not only that you stole the honour of summoning the hero from me! And to top it all off you made a fool of me in front of so many people! You’ll pay for this humiliation with your life!”

“Shut up! Don’t stare at me with your vulgar eyes that are completely possessed with your own fame...”

Felmenia lashed back at Sebastian’s vulgar display of his innermost thoughts. Suimei raised his voice to her as she grimaced in disdain.

“... Huh. So you’re not the only one who can use that thing?”

“Eh? Y-yes. In case something happened to the mage left in charge with the summoning the hero, all Court Mages were gathered to be taught by a messenger from the Salvation Church and Mage’s Guild. No, more importantly we need to stop his summoning...”

As Felmenia starting preparing her magic, Suimei grabbed her shoulder.

“Wait.”

“Wh-!? Why are you stopping me Suimei-dono!?”

Felmenia could not understand at all why Suimei had stopped her. Suimei raised his voice as if it were completely obvious.

“Of course I’ll stop you. In this situation it should be obvious.”

“What’s obvious about it!? He’s made some sort of modification to the magic circle! We don’t know what will happen!”

The summoning circle Sebastian was currently using was something that he had

revised somewhat. Since he was not using the spell the way it was meant to be used, they could only assume it was not safe, not to mention he was in the middle of the summoning itself. The light from his mana and his accumulation of power were only growing stronger, they did not have the time to hesitate. Felmenia was in a rush to get an answer as she understood these facts, however Suimei simply folded his arms and made a grimace.

“No, don’t stop him. It’s been making all sorts of noise, but that summoning circle, it includes a fairly good defensive spell mixed in with it. There’s nothing to protect what will be summoned from the other side, however the protection on the one doing the summoning is quite perfect.”

Suimei had also been thinking of ways of stopping the summoning, however he did not come at a good conclusion.

“Wha... Even for Suimei-dono!?”

“Well, I’d like to say even for me, but... Anyways, even if we stop him there’s that. If we forcefully stop the spell something horrible is certain to happen right?”

“Eh...?”

After hearing Suimei’s warning, Felmenia had a terrible premonition. Just the words something horrible would not normally affect her so much. But to hear those words from Suimei was an entirely different matter. The difference between ‘something horrible’ between the two of them was just that vast. Suimei was completely focused on the pillar of light shooting out of the summoning circle which had begun isolating something from another world as he explained his thoughts.

“He’s using the summoning circle which summons people from another world, it could be called a berserk summoning. If we think about it like that, it has become a summoning calling forth something from another world or an entirely different dimension. The summoning is producing something called a repellent force to wrench open a hole to that other world. If we forcefully stop it while the actual target of the summoning has not settled, that destination will vanish and all the repellent force will return.”

“... What happens when it returns?”

“That’s right.... Well at the worst even at this scale the entire region surrounding the castle may be blown away.”

“S-such a thing.”

Felmenia was at a loss for words towards Suimei’s conjecture. If she had stopped him just now, just what would have happened? Not only herself and the castle, it wasn’t difficult to imagine just how large a catastrophe it could have become.

“Well, that’s what it means to open holes between dimensions. If you ask me, that magic circle is far more dangerous than any single entity it could possible bring forth.”

“I, I see..”

Suimei had no intention of showing sympathy. He heard Felmenia acknowledge him in a bewildered voice and then continued speaking.

“Well. Don’t worry about the summoning. The medium being used to do the summoning is that old man’s mana after all. What comes out will be something which conforms to the scale of the medium. It’s just a trick that something terrible will come out of it. However if the summoning succeeds, I’m pretty sure a section of the castle will break.”

“Th-that’s a problem! There’s still a lot of people inside the castle...”

Before Felmenia could finish her sentence about the impending crisis, the dark purple pillar of light shooting out of the summoning circle suddenly became stronger and Suimei called to her in a strong tone.

“— It’s coming!”

“Ah, Aah!?”

Felmenia shut her eyes before the violent torrent of light. She was only able to let out a surprised voice from her mouth... Felmenia lost track of the source of the immense power emitting the light for an instant. When she regained her sense, before she knew it she was being embraced in Suimei’s arms.

“Ah...”

When she looked up all she could see was Suimei's face shooting off a cold gaze away from her and his indifferent and cool figure. And when she looked below...

"The power escaped towards the sky. With this the damage should only be restricted to this room and its surrounding. Also..."

"Ah!? AAAH!?"

Felmenia suddenly began making a fuss within his arms as if she was suddenly confused by something, Suimei naturally turned his gaze down towards her with a raised eyebrow.

"What's wrong?"

"F-Flying! We're flying!?"

In the middle of the blue sky, Felmenia let out a surprised scream. The two of them were currently in the middle of the empty sky. Suimei had deployed flight magic and was carrying Felmenia in his arms. Glittering mana was scattering from the bottom of Suimei's feet. This was the power that was preventing the two of them from falling from the sky. Suimei was simply standing in the middle of the air calmly. But Felmenia was still in utter shock at the fact that they were flying at all.

"Wh-what!? What is this!?"

Suimei finally managed to guess just what was bothering Felmenia so much.

"Aaah I get it now. There is no flight magic here. I had thought that flight was one of the first things you remembered when learning magic though..."

"M-more importantly, Suimei-dono!?"

"It's fine. We won't fall. If you're worried just hold on tightly."

"T-!? Hold onto a gentleman tightly!? Such a thing... n, no that's not what I—"

"#####!!"

As Felmenia, who was afraid of heights, was in the middle of begging to be let down to the ground, a repulsive voice that truly seemed like it could not possibly exist in this world resounded through the air. This wasn't a sound loud enough to shatter the eardrums, but it was a sound that drove fear into one's heart. Matching the sound, the light pouring out of the summoning circle dispersed like a veil, revealing the source of the scream behind it.

"U, ah..."

It was a form covered in dark black and blood red colours, an enormous beast with four eerie legs. The entire room it was in was covered in the shadow it cast. Its height reached past halfway the height of the tower itself. Its shape was similar to a dog or wolf.

"... Ooh? Even though he's second class something quite large has come out."

"W-what, i-is that...?"

Suimei returned Felmenia's question with a brief look, a cruel laugh, and a single word.

"A monster."

"... Does Suimei-dono know what that is?"

"Aah. It's something that exists in our world after all."

Something from Suimei's world. Felmenia found those words to be terrifying, however she recalled something that gave her a slight doubt.

"From Suimei-dono's world? But Hero-dono and Mizuki-dono had said that there were no monsters in that world."

"It just shows how narrow their view of that world is. They don't know simply because they are blinded by the growth of science. Monsters properly exist even in that world."

"..."

"And that's one of them. Just like this world has devils which are humanity's

enemy, our world has certain systems which are humanity's enemy."

"Sys, tems...?"

"That's right. Those are the monsters of the end. In the other world the popular name for them would be apparitions. They mimic the form of beings from the world and demonstrate that there is no such thing as eternity. They are like a law of the world which accelerates the end of the world."

"L-law, is that not a creature?"

"That's right. That is not a living being, just simple phenomenon the same as lightning or tornadoes. As long as the requirements are met it will definitely occur, a rule of the world. The reason it has the shape of a creature is because taking a physical form makes it easier for it to strike fear in the hearts of humans... is what Leader had said. Well, just look at it. It grips you in fear pretty easily doesn't it?"

Following Suimei's gaze, Felmenia also turned towards the monster, the one known as an apparition. Just as he described, simply looking at its form was enough for goosebumps to appear along her skin. It was the simple instinctual fear that welled up for them as living beings, like an alarm bell incessantly ringing within her body.

"... It is an event of the end. In our world it is not something that attacks people indiscriminately. Just like that, it takes the world and transforms it into a world that has ended as if it was an established fact. When the entire world is filled with its power, all civilization will become simple legend and go off to meet their twilight."

Suimei was speaking in a flat tone, but Suimei was definitely feeling somewhat disturbed at the thing before his eyes and it reflected in his voice. Felmenia was unable to suppress her trembling from this voice. To this world where they summoned a hero to bring them salvation, they had now let loose this kind of thing. Just from a look she could tell that the menace it represented could not be compared to the monsters of their own world. If that thing was truly the vanguard for the end of the world, it was possible that the world Suimei came from was in a much more critical situation than her own.

"Gu..."

After hearing Suimei's explanation and seriously looking at it, Felmenia swallowed her saliva.

“FUHAHAHAHAHA!! Do you see that!? If you know how to use it, summoning is so simple!! It is by no means something only you can fucking do Stingray!!”

A vulgar laughter filled the air. Sebastian had been completely captivated by the success of the summoning. In the thralls of joy he seemed unable to make any sort of sound judgment about the apparition itself. Even if he succeeded in summoning, he was truly worthless. At the sight of the man completely drunk with his own laughter, Suimei let out a flabbergasted voice in spite of the apparition before him.

“Uwaaaa. He just spouted out words like everything is decided.”

“Say all you want boy! From here on you will all fucking die at the hands of the monster I summoned!!”

Sebastian was barking out their death sentence, but Suimei only had cold words to return to him.

“... That's impossible I'm afraid.”

“What kind of excuses are you spouting!? Go my monster from another world! Devour my enemies before me!”

Sebastian had given his orders, but the apparition stayed exactly where it was and did not even react to him.

“Wha...?”

“See?”

“Wh-why!? Why won't you listen to what I say!? Why won't you do as I say!?”

Sebastian was yelling at the apparition, and it returned a glare back at him as if it was staring at something detestable. Like a living creature it focused its eyes right on the man before him as if it was ready to kill him.

“Heeeee....”

And finally he recognized just how foolish a thing it was that he had done. Without breaking eye contact with the apparition before him he fell to the ground. Then...

“U-UAAAAAAAAAH!!”

Sebastian’s scream was brought to an end as the apparition crushed him.

“Fool...”

While still floating in the air, Felmenia let out these short words towards Sebastian. He was the worst colleague possible, but she still held pity for him to meet his end like this. However this did not mean that she forgave him. Once more she turned to Suimei.

“Suimei-dono. Why did that thing not listen to what he said?”

“Eh? Aah, it’s that summoning circle... It’s origin is a bit different, but parts of it are similar to something from our world. Fundamentally, summoning circles and spells use a contract as a condition so that the one summoned over will naturally be compelled into obedience by that power. It does not matter whether it is a phenomenon or a living creature, it will normally obey without question... It is also like that in this world correct?”

“Yes. I don’t know about the case of a phenomenon but that certainly does describe the summoning spells of this world.”

The things Suimei had said were very similar to what Felmenia also understood on this topic. She couldn’t say they were identical, but the foundations were pretty much the same. Other than the hero summoning, the majority of summoning done in this world was used to bind a summoned creature to their will using a contract as a prerequisite. This lined up perfectly with what Suimei had said.

“Summoning, awakening, petitioning, possession. These are the four categories of summoning spells. The one we just witnessed would fall under awakening... However, the summoning circle there was created with the goal of summoning heroes. That’s why the portion to bind the will of the summoned being had been

excluded.”

“It was excluded?”

“Isn’t it because the image of a hero made into a slave just isn’t very picturesque? Besides, try remembering. That circle’s triangle had been drawn on backwards hadn’t it?”

“Now that you mention it, that’s true.”

“Like most everything else, in magic, when a key component is reversed then the effect created by that component will also end up flipping over. The triangle in the summoning circle was largely a symbol used for binding that which appeared. If the regular position is binding, than its inverse is liberation. In other words.”

“That has been released into this world.”

“That’s how it is. Well, I can’t imagine that kind of thing obeying humans anyways.”

“Th-then, a spell to control that thing...”

“Nope.”

Felmenia was unable to object to Suimei’s simple conclusion. Seeing how he had dove down much further into the depths of magic than she had, his persuasiveness was stronger than anything. In that case, if it cannot be controlled...

“—Oh Flame. Thou art endowed with the flame of justice, but disconnected from the flame of logic. Burn everything to ashes, the white calamity of truth! Truth Flare!”

Felmenia thrust out her arms while still being held by Suimei and weaved her spell together. The magical white flames shot forth. She had poured as much of her mana into it as she could. It was a blow in no way inferior to the time she had taken down a monster in the desert. The apparition let out an excited roar as the giant pillar of flame thrust itself into it. However.

“It, it didn’t work...”

“Looks like it.”

The moment Felmenia’s magic had touched the apparition, her magic had dispersed into simple white particles of light. The apparition was in perfect health. It was like nothing had happened at all. The attack that contained Felmenia’s entire soul had completely been denied. She could not defeat it. Felmenia’s heart had been gripped by fear.

“T-that thing... Just what should we...”

“Isn’t that obvious? We beat it up.”

A simple, manly and fearless declaration.

“M-magic didn’t work you know!? Just how...”

“Your magic. But magic from that world isn’t so damn limited!”

Suimei made this declaration and began chanting a spell in a language that Felmenia had never heard before.

“The shine of end resolve.” (The power to transform the perfectly clear blue light into the heavenly sky)

It began right away as Suimei began chanting. Below his feet, even though there was nothing to draw on, a large blue magic circle had begun forming. At the same time the world had begun to quake. A terrible sound like that of metal being twisted by sheer force was ringing through the air. Objects on the ground were being lifted into the air by his power, and the brittle ones shatter into pieces becoming trash in the empty sky. The clamouring torrent of mana formed a countless number of deep blue lightning bolts which swallowed all the came close... The shaking earth, the scream of the ground, and as if to give praise to all of that the thunderous lightning resounded throughout the sky. And then, the chant continued.

“Aqua horizontal in hand.” (The indistinguishable horizon over the ocean. For this single instant that boundary lies within my hand.)

Before long, Suimei's right hand had drawn out the symbol of a sword in the air and was covered in a blue spectrum. Many magic circles were taking shape and converging on that one point. It was as if his hand was sucking up all the blue light in the air. For a single instant the sky had turned dark as it was the dead of the evening, and then...

“Sever the blue of blue!!” (Cut through the azure sky. It's name is the dazzling blue among blue!!)

As he thread together these last words, Suimei swung his arm down splendidly.

“蒼銘斬!!” (Blue Inscribing Slash ‘Ao Mei Zan’ – t.n. Suimei switched from English to Japanese.)

The last words were like a declaration of what was to come, a slashing blue sword, Blue Inscribing Slash. The magic was a mix of star and void attributes. The void attribute took everything that existed in the void of the air and made it his power. The star attribute borrowed power from the starry sky. Blue Inscribing Slash was blue sky magic. The magic circles deployed over a large area and in countless numbers. It's origins were from Kabbalah numerology and meteorology, a composite spell from two systems...

With the final words Suimei brandished his blue right hand. The perfectly clear blue light the same colour as the sky formed a massive blade. The traces left behind by the blade left a blue aurora in its wake as he slashed down into the giant apparition in an instant. The brilliant blue aurora denied the twilight and the monster twisted in torment beneath it. Shortly, a hair raising death cry filled the air as it collapsed to the ground and began convulsing.

“That's that.”

As his magic ended, Suimei slowly landed in front of the fallen apparition and let down Felmenia from his arms.

“See? It's alright now.”

“Ah...”

Suimei stood her up and straightened out her clothing naturally. Felmenia greatly admired his completely nonchalant movements and kind behaviour. These were

the same movements that she had previously witnessed, the kindness he showed when he was concerned for others. Lately she had only been shown his selfish actions, however his true nature was that of a kind young man. Even when he was headed off into a completely different direction for the hero and his friend who he cared for, he did this so that he could create a path back to their world not just for himself, but for all of them. Just like he was doing now, he truly cared for others.

Felmenia raised her eyes. The apparition that Suimei struck with magic had completely collapsed and stopped moving. It was a menace which completely denied her own magic, but it was struck down by Suimei's magic which defied all common sense in this world. Starting from the fight in the White Wall Garden, to flying in the sky, to explaining this mysterious phenomenon, to techniques which wove together multiple magics at once. Everything that had happened before Felmenia's eyes were like something out of a dream world.

“So this is... So this is what a mage can do...”

Before she noticed it, while staring at Suimei's back while he walked towards the fallen apparition, she muttered out these words. ‘So this is magic?’ It wasn't restricted to just spells. It did not depend on the power of the elements. It used power from his own self and his surroundings. It exposed the truth of all existence and used it as magic. This was the magic from the magician Yakagi Suimei's world. If this was the level of mysteries that a single person could hold, then the place that she had been, those that she competed with, those that she had defeated were all confined in a terribly small world. Up until now hasn't she just been fixated on extremely tiny matters? Suimei turned around and faced her. His face was neither exasperated nor fearless. If she were to put it in words, it was simply the face of one that did not need to be challenged.

“... Didn't I say it before? I am a scholar of mysteries. In this world mages recite chants so that they can use strong magic, this is their simple goal. However for us it is different. The magicians of that world exist to unravel the truth behind all existence. Their goal is to become omnipotent themselves. Yes, for the sake of surpassing the world itself. Those known as mages simply think in a fundamentally different manner.”

“Does that also apply to Suimei-dono?”

“That’s right. I will arrive at the truth behind magic without fail and accomplish the wish that my father was unable to fulfill himself. That’s why...”

The apparition crumbled away and vanished. Felmenia watched in admiration at the thought that there existed someone who would stand before such a giant apparition which gave off an air of absolute despair. Not only that he had struck it down so easily.

“... I will definitely return to that other world. And then, I will show that I have seized all the world’s potential.”

With that resolution made, the magician’s voice who swore to something that could not be seen closed the curtain on the fight.



Suimei, who had just defeated the apparition summoned by Sebastian with a single spell, was looking around the room.

“Aaaah. As I thought everything is broken.”

The shock of the summoning itself as well as the overwhelming pressure of the apparition’s massive body had destroyed the ritual site without leaving a single trace. The thing Suimei was looking for was not there as expected.

Suimei was looking for the summoning circle which brought them to this world. The only reason he wasn’t completely disappointed at this fact was that he was already able to make a copy of the magic circle itself. He had memorized all the fine details behind it, so it wasn’t that much of a problem. It would not match up to the original which had already created a path with the other world, but even so he believed it wouldn’t stop him from finding a way back home. After looking around some more, Suimei had found something else entirely. It was the man he had thought gotten crushed by the apparition just now.

“... He really survived. The strength of evil luck I guess. Goddammit.”

It was the Court Mage Sebastian Kran. He should have been crushed by the apparition but it seemed he had managed to crawl into a gap in the rubble. He didn’t have any obvious wounds, he had just passed out at some point. Suimei rolled over the unconscious Court Mage so that he faced the sky and shrugged

his shoulders. There was no problems with just leaving him here like that. By the time he wakes up, he would probably find himself in a prison. After thinking there was nothing left to find, Suimei turned back towards Felmenia.

“S-Suimei-dono...”

Felmenia was standing there with a slight blush on her face.

“...?”

She then stepped forwards and gripped both of her hands tightly as if pulling something into her chest. Suimei wasn't entirely sure what was going on.

“U, umm... Court Mage-san...?”

“There is no need to be so humble, please call me Menia. Suimei-dono.”

“Eh? Eh?”



Suimei shook his head towards Felmenia who had just asked him to call her by her nickname with a flushed face. Suimei was unable to hide his bewilderment and embarrassment at the girl's sudden change in attitude. However Felmenia pushed on with passion.

“That magnificent spell that defeated the apparition. It was truly amazing.”

“Y-yeah. Thanks.”

“Right up until the end, you took care of the failures of my worthless self. I don't

have enough words to express my gratitude.”

“Aah, no, there’s no need to be so polite. Rather, um... What happened to you?”

At the completely unexpected turn of events, the voice that Suimei let out had cracked. He had no idea what was going on, it was even creepy just how she had suddenly taken on such a formal attitude. On the other hand, he had no idea if Felmenia was aware of his bewilderment or not.

“No, that’s. Putting that into words would be somewhat embarrassing but...”

“???”

Felmenia’s cheeks had turned to an entirely new shade of red, just what was she about to say.

“Is somebody there!?”

A loud voice was calling out to them from the main building. Suimei did not recognize it. When he turned towards the voice, there were several castle guards running towards them. It seems they noticed the abnormality... rather it was more likely they noticed the abnormality had calmed down and now was a good time to come investigate. Looking at the guards, Suimei raised his voice to Felmenia in a troubled tone.

“Aah, I’m sorry but...”

“Yes. I fully understand. It’s alright if I make it so that Suimei-dono’s involvement remains completely unknown right?”

“Yeah.”

Felmenia had correctly grasped everything that Suimei had wanted with only a few words. He gave her a nod as she immediately took action.

“By your command. It will be done just as Suimei-dono wills it.”

As Felmenia said this, her face that seemed it was about to melt at any time transformed into a commanding one in an instant and she turned to deal with the guards.

“Good work.”

“White Flame-sama! Umm, what exactly is this disastrous scene?”

“Umu, just now Sebastian-dono went mad and caused a disturbance. I was present in the area and brought it to a close.”

Felmenia gave a short explanation without any unnecessary information. It seems that she was dealing with them exactly as Suimei intended. One of the guard then turned towards Suimei.

“The one over there is, if I remember correctly it is Hero-sama’s friend...”

“Aah, Suimei-dono was also around the area by coincidence. Regarding that matter that is all there is.”

“Is that right?”

“Sebastian-dono is currently lying on the ground over there. If he wakes up I’m not sure whether he will start something again, it would be best to seize him while we have the chance.

“By your command.”

Suimei was genuinely impressed with Felmenia. She had immediately brought a close to the conversation that he had wanted to avoid. She had an ability which stood in stark contrast to how he was seeing her until now. He did not see a single shadow of the clumsy and incompetent girl. He wasn’t sure why the gap in her character was so large, but anybody who saw her current figure would sing praises of her talent. After finishing the talk with the guards, Felmenia once more turned towards Suimei. However her face was just as he expected as if to deny his silent praise. The gallant expression that had just dealt with the guards had completely vanished, and the expression of a girl with flushed red cheeks had returned.

“With this, is everything alright?”

“A-aah.”

Felmenia stepped forwards in little steps with a brilliant smile on her face. Her behaviour reminded Suimei of an emotionally attached puppy. Just why was she

making a face as if she was happily wagging her tail while making a cute bark asking for her master to praise her? Felmenia was still standing there waiting for something with great expectations. Suimei spoke up in a slightly hesitant voice.

“... Thank you. U-um... Menia?”

“Y-you’re welcome!”

For some reason his words of gratitude had pleased her greatly. Felmenia starting jumping and twirling about in excitement. Her actions just drove Suimei’s bewilderment further and further into the depths... Afterwards, the Court Mage’s arrest progressed without any interference. However, Felmenia’s transformation had remained completely unchanged.

“J-just what’s with that?”

It seems this young man could not speak down to Reiji about this topic anymore.



The place was Astel Kingdom, at the large gates before the royal castle Camellia. There, the kingdom’s soldiers, a band and the first-class knights of the kingdom were flanking a grand chariot carrying Reiji, Mizuki and Titania. When they passed through the gates, they would be greeted by the citizens of the royal capital Metel for the first time. This was the first step on the road that led towards the Demon Lord’s subjugation, a grand parade to unveil the hero to the castle town. Suimei spoke up in an unsatisfied voice.

“The time has finally come huh.”

This was the day they would leave on their journey. When the parade ended, Reiji and company along with a few knights would immediately begin their journey to defeat the Demon Lord. It wasn’t surprising that Suimei would let his regret show on his face. However Reiji still wore a bright expression. Suimei did not know if this was because Reiji was excited for the upcoming journey or whether he was putting on that kind of face to hide his nervousness. Regardless this was the face Reiji usually put on, he then turned to Suimei.

“We’re off.”

“You say that awfully lightly.”

Suimei returned Reiji’s words with a disappointed face, in response Reiji put on a very serious, business like attitude and rebuked him.

“That’s not true. Even though I’m like this I’ve thought about it quite a bit you know? I still believe my answer at that time was not a mistake after all.”

“No, it was a mistake. No matter how you think about it that was a mistake. How many times do I have to say it before you get it?”

Suimei was acting as usual always throwing in his matter of fact opinion towards Reiji. Titania held both her hands near her heart and spoke lightly in a worried voice.

“Suimei-sama...”

This girl was Astel Kingdom’s princess. Of course she wanted to deny Suimei’s words, but she still had complex feelings about the entire matter. She was of the opinion that the subjugation must continue, however just like the King she had great feelings of guilt about it. She was shaking in distress about the entire situation. Reiji lightly tapped her shoulder to dispel her anxiety and once more spoke to Suimei.

“That’s wrong Suimei. Whether I go or not, the demon army will continue their attack on humanity. Since we cannot go home, there will eventually be nowhere for us to run away to. In that case, one day we will end up having to fight the Demon Lord anyways. I won’t say it is an absolute certainty. But I still believe we should strike sooner or later. If I spend the time now to fight many enemies and grow stronger, the day should come where I will be able to face off against the Demon Lord. Of course this is why I volunteered to defeat the Demon Lord.”

Reiji had let out all of his thoughts on the matter. Setting aside the absurdity of going off on the subjugation, he really did at least work out some form of plan. Suimei couldn’t determine whether it was a good or bad plan. But going in with the assumption that a fight with the Demon Lord was completely unavoidable, it was not a bad coping mechanism at the least. This didn’t stop Suimei from being a bit ill-mannered about it though.

“Reiji, did you ever consider that after running away, one day someone else

would go and defeat the Demon Lord?”

“I can’t possibly think of such optimistic outcomes, it’s simply against my principles. I believe that if we were to disconnect ourselves from this matter we will definitely be killed.”

It was only proper to not be optimistic, however...

“You were always one to just charge forwards and slam into your problems.”

“Shouldn’t I?”

“I don’t hate it, but just in this case I think it is the wrong approach. This is on a completely different level from the delinquents and biker gangs in the neighbourhood.”

Suimei was referring to incidents from the past. Even in his everyday normal life Reiji was filled to the brim with a sense of justice. He had come into disputes with these sorts of amusing fellows on multiple occasions. Even in those occasions Reiji pulled through with brute strength and his virtuous character. However in this case he was facing off against actual demons. The probability of him coming out of every encounter unharmed was much lower. However Reiji spoke with confidence.

“That being the case you would still say the to me?”

“... Really, whenever I say this you say that, huh.”

“Hahaha.”

Seeing Suimei’s regular exasperated face, Reiji let out a happy laugh. This was the usual exchange between the two best friends. It certainly wasn’t bad to Suimei either. Reiji spoke of his thoughts one last time.

“... I understand what you are saying. All I’m saying is that I’m not running to my death, I’m running forwards so that I can live in this place. Just, it’ll be a little reckless.”

Reiji understood that he was talking in circles. Being reckless was one thing, however this wasn’t just pure recklessness. He was taking action so that he could

stay alive, even those actions themselves were connected to his life. As a result his actions would bring him closer to both life and death all the same. Even so, Reiji chose to take action. Reiji then let a serious voice to strike at Suimei.

“It’s alright. Right after this we will dive straight towards the Demon Lord—”

“Oi.”

“Hahaha. I’m kidding. Above all, I need to get stronger.”

Suimei wondered just why would he make a joke in this kind of serious setting. Upon thinking on it, Reiji truly was anxious about the entire situation. If he was always tense it would be bad for his heart. Surely he just wanted to let out some stress once in a while. That’s why every now and then he would let out a laughter to dispel his anxiety. It wasn’t impudence. There was no way Suimei could be angry towards this. As a hero, hope was being poured into him from every direction. This was Reiji’s way of resisting the strong pressure brought on by this immense duty. That’s why Suimei made a serious face, and spoke in a way that only Reiji could hear.

“... If it gets too dangerous take Mizuki and run away and hide. Just because you’ve become a hero, there’s no guarantee it will go just like a manga or novel where you can defeat all of your enemies after all.”

“... I understand. However I still plan on pushing myself to the limit.”

“So stubborn.”

Suimei gave an exasperated sigh seeing as Reiji would not back down. This time Reiji spoke in a voice so that the others could hear him.

“Still, I’m surprised you’re okay Suimei.”

“Eh?”

“The thing that just happened recently, that.”

Suimei was still wondering just what exactly Reiji was talking about when Mizuki seemed to understand what he meant earlier and clarified it for Suimei.

“Ah, is it about when that Court Mage went mad at the ritual site?”

“Yeah. If I remember correctly, Suimei was nearby right?”

Reiji was turning the topic onto the time that Suimei got his revenge on the Court Mage Sebastian Kran. At that time Reiji and company had left the castle and snuck into town. They must have heard of it in passing after they had gotten back to the castle.

“Ah, well yeah. I wasn’t actually close enough that I would get hurt though.”

“But you still got wrapped up in it right?”

“Well, more or less.”

Suimei was just giving Reiji vague answers, Mizuki decided to chime in as well.

“When I came back with Reiji-kun and Tia an entire section of the castle had broken off. We heard a Court Mage had gone berserk too. Not only that there were rumours of a giant monster appearing. It was just so surprising...”

The three of them had only heard the specifics from talking to others, they did not know the truth. As a matter of fact, before the three of them had snuck out, Suimei had planned everything to work out exactly so they would only know the details by word of mouth. When they had invited him to sneak out of the castle the other day, Suimei immediately consulted with the King and Felmenia to bring matters to an end precisely when the three of them would not be present. The summoning of the apparition was slightly out of Suimei’s realm of expectations though.

“Truly, it is good that everything came to an end peacefully.”

Reiji made a relieved face as he made this statement. Suimei gave him a frank reply.

“The ritual site was spectacularly completely destroyed though.”

“As long as Suimei is safe that kind of thing doesn’t matter.”

“... How can you say that kind of embarrassing line with a straight face?”

Reiji's delighted face directed towards Suimei's safety was obviously not a facade. This was a smile coming from his true feelings. In this case it was more embarrassing for the one listening to him. While Suimei was thinking of such things, Titania raised her voice with an apologetic tone.

"I'm sorry Suimei-sama. The people of the castle had caused you such trouble."

"No, after all Meni... I mean Stingray-san ended up coming to my rescue. There is no need for the Princess to bow her head to me."

Titania breathed out a sigh of relief. As expected, she was just like the King who felt a sense of responsibility towards all sorts of things. Reiji suddenly spoke up in a delighted voice.

"As expected of Sensei. She's amazing after all."

Reiji gave a nod. He had an amazing amount of trust in that prideful girl. She also happened to be his teacher. Above all else he seemed to hold a strong longing for her as well. To put it bluntly, it was probably love.

"Doesn't Suimei also think so? Right?"

"Uh?"

"About Sensei. Don't you also think she's an amazing person Suimei?"

"Aaah, yeah, well, sure."

"I know right?"

Reiji was unusually seeking out acknowledgement for his opinion. Just how much did he want others to share in his assessment of Felmenia?

(Aaaah...)

Suimei just remembered something that may have been the answer to that question. Now that he recalled he felt that Reiji was especially weak to women with large breasts. He was dense as a rock when it came to the sensibilities of women, however when it came to women he was usually quite fixated on this point. His slightly reddened face was surely because he held feelings of love for

that girl. Certainly Felmenia was quite well endowed despite her height, there was also more than just that but... To Suimei's image of Reiji, it had to be the breasts. Quite naturally, there were others who had come to the exact same conclusion as Suimei.

"Au, is Felmenia-san also a rival...?"

"White Flame-dono is a powerful enemy Mizuki. That lovely silver hair and cold beautiful face. Felmenia possesses many weapons."

Mizuki had turned her back to Reiji with tears in her eyes. Next to her Titania was secretly burning with a combative spirit at the addition of another rival.

"Uuuu, it's the boing boing..."

"Kuu, if I had that much even Reiji-sama would immediately..."

The girls had been tossed into the depths of grief as they held their breasts in their hands. Giving a brief glance behind him, Reiji decided to change the topic.

"What do you plan on doing after this, Suimei?"

"Hm? Not much. I'm thinking of leaving the castle."

"Eh...?"

It was the first time Reiji heard of this. Suimei had not spoken of his plans to Reiji even once. Of course this also applied to both Mizuki and Titania who seemed to be frozen in place in confusion. Mizuki was the first to gather her wits and as a representative for all three of them, questioned Suimei in a voice which mixed both surprise and worry together.

"Suimei-kun. What are you planning by leaving the castle?"

"No, I don't have any particular plan. I just want to live outside."

Suimei let out a complete lie with a serious face. Next it was Reiji's turn to question Suimei with a somewhat tense expression.

"What about your livelihood?"

“I’ll find a job and figure it out.”

After answering, it had now come to Titania who gave him a proposition.

“Suimei-sama. If you stay in the castle my father will guarantee your livelihood. There should be no need to forcibly leave no?”

“That may be so, but I’m leaving nonetheless.”

“Why is that? Even if public order within the royal capital is better than anywhere else in the country, for you who has come from another world without knowing our customs or having the divine protection of the hero summoning it is difficult for me to say that the land outside the castle will be safe for you, Suimei-sama. I don’t think there is any advantage to leaving the castle...”

It was certainly exactly as Titania had stated. The three of them had no idea what Suimei’s actual goal or power was, so it was natural for them to believe this.

“Yeah... Though it may be fairly impolite for me to say this, I feel quite uncomfortable in the castle.”

“Ah...”

An awkward face filled with sympathy. Titania had certainly heard all the rumours that surrounded Suimei. She had gone silent precisely because she understood the meaning behind Suimei’s words. Reiji let out his anger without trying to hide it.

“Should I go say something about it?”

Suimei was wondering just what Reiji was implying with these words. There was no way he would be going to every single person who had spread the rumours individually and tell them off about it. No matter what he thought of the manner that would just be absurd.

“No, it’s fine. Are you trying to mess everything up just as you’re about to leave? It would absolutely complicate matters further.”

“U... but.”

“It’s fine I said. I’ve properly worked out a plan from now on.”

Mizuki was suspicious of Suimei's plan and questioned him.

"A plan you say, what are you going to do about money?"

"I was planning on selling my schoolbooks and some other things I won't be needing."

"Can you even sell those? Everything is written in Japanese right?"

"Someone curious will buy it. I just need to exaggerate the value and price a bit."

"Is that really okay?"

"Well yeah."

"Really?"

"It's really true. I've more or less laid out my plans from here on after all."

Mizuki did not seem convinced at all. If Suimei had taken part in the studies of magic, military arts and general knowledge alongside them she would surely not be making that kind of face. Suimei had acquired the required knowledge all on his own, not that she knew any of this, so it was only natural that she was worried. Suimei planned on just clouding over the matter and turned the whole conversation around on Mizuki.

"Actually, it's fine to be worried about me and all, but Mizuki, shouldn't you be more worried about yourself?"

"It-it'll be alright! I've also become able to use magic after all!"

Mizuki had been learning magic alongside Reiji. According to Titania her ability put her on par with Reiji's from a technical standpoint. There was probably no need to worry about her safety, however Suimei's focus was not on her safety.

"What I want to say is that, magic. Just because you've become able to use magic, don't repeat what you had before in the past. Right, Reiji?"

Suimei revealed his true intentions and turned to Reiji for approval. Reiji could

only let out a weak laughter as he knew exactly what Suimei was talking about.

“A, ahaha...”

“Suu-S-S-S-Suimei-kun! You promised not to talk about that!”

Mizuki’s face had suddenly become bright red and she had begun panicking. She of course remembered what Suimei was talking about, more like she could never forget. It was her dark history when the three of them had just met where in a sense, she was not able to be saved.

“You’re father is worried. You’re always wearing that mini belt, red muffler and those finger-less gloves, uuu....”

“When did Suimei-kun become my father!? Or rather the hero items having nothing to do with it! Don’t pretend to cry~!”

Mizuki began to squawk and shout and was raising quite a bit of a fuss. On the other hand Titania, who had no idea what they were talking about, was look towards Suimei with her head cocked to the side in confusion.

“Is it something from the past?”

“Yeah.”

“Suimei-kun! You absolutely cannot say it! Absolutely not! Absolutely I said! I’m serious!”

This was the most serious and desperate Mizuki had been ever since arriving in this world. To her it may just have been that hiding her dark history was more important than being summoned to another world. Reiji threw Mizuki a lifeline and turned towards Titania, acting like he was telling a small child not to ask about a dangerous topic.

“A lot had happened to Mizuki, Tia.”

“I’m curious.”

“Don’t be! This is an important secret just between us! It’s our secret garden! It’s a dangerous fact that nobody could ever know!”

“When you put it like that I just want to know about it even more...”

Titania was making a stiff expression as she felt like she was a little sad at being left out. Suimei decided to cut Mizuki some slack and moved onto a more important topic.

“Setting that aside, is it alright for you to take part in the Demon Lord Subjugation Princess?”

“Ara, I’d rather you not see me in such a poor light Suimei-sama. I have also completed my studies magic in the royal palace. I am sure I will be of use to Reiji-sama.”

The princess Titania thrust out her chest, which was about the same size as Mizuki’s, with pride as she claimed this. Suimei wasn’t sure just how good she was at magic, but this wasn’t his point.

“I’m sure with regards to magic there would be no problems Princess, but what about your position?”

“There is no need to worry about that. Father will take care of the country. There is also the counsellors and my older brother, so if I alone leave Astel they will be able to manage just fine.”

“No, that’s not what I’m talking about...”

What Suimei really meant was that Titania was loved and admired by the people as a princess. In that case why would she dive into something as dangerous as the Demon Lord’s subjugation? Not only that why would the King allow it? Any parent would find their child precious. No matter how much he was entrusting his wishes to his child, sending them off into a vortex of danger was a little questionable. It was putting it a little bluntly, but the position of Princess served a special use within a country, so the entire matter was mysterious to Suimei. He was wondering what the reason was and whether there was something going on behind the scenes. Before he could put these thoughts into words, it was Titania who began speaking.

“Suimei-sama. This is the mission that I have been charged with.”

It was a declaration filled with dignity.

“Your mission?”

“... Yes. No matter how strong Reiji-sama is, we cannot simply thrust the entire situation into his hands. It is necessary that somebody from Astel share in his burden. The one chosen for this role was me. I’ve long made my resolution.”

“...”

Suimei wasn’t doubting her resolve. The words she spoke were definitely filled with sincerity and determination. She was here due to her strong sense of responsibility. He felt to her, and to the kingdom, the reasoning behind such a decision was still a little weak. However the matter didn’t really concern him. Titania was a person that was worth putting his trust into. If she was going to lend her powers to Reiji and Mizuki, then he could not ask for more.

“Suimei-sama”

“No, I apologize for the discourtesy. Please take care of Reiji and Mizuki.”

“Yes. Leave it to me. I will show you that I will bring everybody back safely without fail.”

Suimei felt it may have been wrong to ask this of a princess, but still she made this strong declaration of accepting his request. Then, Titania suddenly called out to Suimei.

“Also, Suimei-sama.”

“What is it?”

“To me, Reiji-sama and Mizuki have become my irreplaceable friends. In that case, as Reiji-sama’s friend, you are also my friend. Would you stop speaking to me in such a formal manner?”

It was a modest request. It was the sort a request a girl of her standing should not be asking of a person of Suimei’s standing.

“Is it alright?”

“Please.”

After pulling himself together, Suimei decided to accept her request.

“... Got it. I will do that, Prin...”

“It’s Tia. Suimei.”

Titania said this with a great smile. It was such a bright smile that if one did not have a resistance towards women, they would fall for her immediately. This smile in some ways resembled Reiji’s. However this did not apply to Suimei and he returned her smile and answered.

“Aah. Best regards, Tia.”

“Yes. With this the four of us are all friends.”

Surely the friends that this girl had in this world were all friends who would take her position into consideration at all times. This was probably the first time that she had made true friends. Now that that matter had concluded, Suimei called out to Reiji.

“Hey.”

“Hm?”

“No, wh...”

However upon seeing Reiji’s carefree face, Suimei decided to hold back his words. What Suimei had wanted to ask was ‘what if there was a means to go back home, would you? If you’ll wait, I’ll make one’. However he stopped. There’s no way Reiji would change his decision if he said it. It would only cause him to waver unnecessarily. In that case it was better not to say it. Until the time comes, Suimei would seal these words within him. So instead, Suimei gave his encouragement to Reiji.

“Just, do your best.”

“Yeah. I’ll do my best. Thanks Suimei.”

“Aah.”

Suimei put out his fist and Reiji met it with his own. It seemed that he’ll have to

put off this kind of amicable conversation with his friend for some time. Reiji was still giving off his brilliant smile. This was his first step onto the road of hardships. Yet his smile simply said that there was no need to worry about anything, truly a brave face. Before long, the preparations for the parade had completed, and Titania urged Reiji onward.

“Then let us depart, Reiji-sama.”

“Yeah. Mizuki, make sure you stick close to me.”

“...”

Reiji just held out his arm casually. Mizuki was at a complete loss for words due to embarrassment but nodded her head and took him up on his offer. It was certain that Reiji simply thought that it was safer for her to be nearby, but there was no way Mizuki and Titania interpreted it that way. Though completely embarrassed Mizuki looked extremely happy clinging onto Reiji. Titania however was staring at them in envy...

“R-Reiji-sama! Me too!”

“Eeh? Tia!?”

Titania suddenly dove towards Reiji’s other arm. Reiji was gripped in confusion for only a moment. After realizing her intent... no in reality he didn’t actually understand. Titania wrapped herself around Reiji’s arm.

“Yeah. Tia don’t get separated from me.”

“— !! Yes!!”

Titania returned Reiji’s words with an enormous smile and a loud yell... He was surrounded by two beauties. Not only that they were both holding tightly onto both his arms. It was the figure of a magnificent hero standing atop the chariot just like that. Looking around, the men in the area, the knights and soldiers were all staring with envy and killing intent. Going along with them Suimei let out a mumble.

“... I should just leave them all behind after all.”

He was jealous. Absolutely jealous. He wasn’t able to stop his ugly thoughts.

This frustration was something he shared with all men in the area. However when Suimei thought of it carefully, his plan would lead to Reiji living a life happily surrounded by girls. While Suimei was thinking of such rude things, Reiji spoke up.

“Did you say something Suimei?”

“No, nothing.”

“...? Really? If not then it’s fine.”

Reiji didn’t quite understand. Seeing how he was taking part in such a scene there’s no way he would notice any of the subtleties around him. This applied to both the women and men around him. And while still making a confused face and with the two girls now having settled down happily onto the chariot, they departed from Suimei.

The sound of the giant gates filled the air along with the band’s music followed shortly by the thunderous applause from the other side. Just before the gates closed again, Suimei was now the only one there. He had been the only one left behind... No, he was standing there alone precisely so that he would be left behind. This melancholic loneliness was the result of him refusing to accept everything that was happening.

“I really did it huh...”

Suimei muttered these lonely words as he gazed into the horizon. Simply because he wanted to return, that he must return, was it perhaps a mistake turn his back on the dangers facing his friends? This thought crossed Suimei’s mind as he watched the back of his friends headed off towards danger... Standing on his own, he would head off on an entirely different path, was it not something that they would consider unforgivable? Was this behaviour not unfitting of a magician of the Society? Still, no matter how much he thought of these things, heading down the path towards the Demon Lord was the wrong path. He still had his thesis to accomplish, there was no point if he couldn’t return home. He had a promise he swore to accomplish. He had someone he had to save. Thus it was fine for him not to shoulder the burdens of an entirely different world. However before the others, this may simply be a childish excuse.

“...”

While thinking of all these things, Suimei looked up to the heavens. As he stared into the vast blue emptiness of the sky, he recalled the figures of those he had gotten involved with up to this point.

His father who raised him, taught him magic and was taken away from him in the middle of his journey.

The leader of the Society who always pushed unreasonable demands onto him.

The girl with a blue silhouette who was cursed by Ludwig.

The extremely stubborn vanguard of the Chivalric Order of the Rose Cross.

His childhood friend who was the successor to the nearby kenjutsu dojo.

His choice was a selfish one. Suimei was very well aware of this fact. However when he recalled these faces as he closed his eyes, he truly believed that this was the only choice left to him.

Epilogue I

Several days had passed since Reiji and company departed from the castle. After finishing up his plans on what to do from that point onward, Suimei left the royal castle Camellia on his own. It should be obvious but there was no grand parade to see him off as it had been with Reiji. The beginning of his journey was a lonely affair, however this did not particularly bother Suimei. He skillfully informed Astel's King Almadious and Felmenia – who seemed extremely reluctant to part from him – of his departure. To Suimei the quiet which accompanied him suited him perfectly as he headed towards the royal capitol Metel. His first destination would be what is called an adventurer's guild within Metel. He had something he must acquire from there... but before that he figured he should do something about his clothing.

(I really didn't think he would hand over money...)

Suimei mumbled to himself in his mind as he brought a heavy pouch up to his face and shook it. The sound of metal rubbing together rung out clearly. Just as Suimei was about to leave the castle, the prime minister Gless had handed him a pouch filled with twenty or so gold coins. The prime minister stared a hole through him with hate and passed on patronizing words that Suimei should thank the King. Surely he had heard many of the rumours from when Suimei had shut himself in his room. As a result he pushed what he assumed was pity money onto Suimei and acted like he was trying to drive him out of the castle. It seemed this was arranged by King Almadious. Suimei slightly remembered the prime minister hinting towards that. Suimei scratched his head weakly at the unexpected event.

(I said I didn't need any assistance. Did the King just want me to owe him a

favour...?)

Suimei had previously refused the King's assistance in the audience chamber. Suimei was suspicious that there was something lying behind this gift even after having refused. Though of course, he was talking about that King.

He wasn't one to craftily plot anything so it probably was a simple show of good will. Even considering this Suimei did not like feeling obligated to anybody, so he wasn't particularly happy about it.

For example, "I helped you so if danger ever falls upon us come help," or "I'll make public of your connection to Astel," the King could use his gift to bind Suimei down in this kind of way. Suimei knew there was no way it would work out like that, however the fact that it put him in that kind of potential situation was also true. In the end the King definitely did this because of his own conscience and kindness. There was the saying that the good you do for others is good you do yourself. This surely applied to that gentle King.

"Haaaa... I guess it can't be helped. Well, if he wasn't like that he wouldn't be the King..."

The King had taken into account that Suimei would have rejected the gold if he had given it to him in person. If he left it up to the prime minister he was sure Suimei would not be able to refuse. If he had then surely that bar code baldy would raise all sorts of hell. To Suimei who only wanted to leave peacefully, he had no choice but to accept. It would be a different story if there was a clear demerit to accepting, but since there wasn't it just made it hard to return it.

The gift Suimei received was money. He did require a fair amount of it from here on out. If he added the necessities that required money like travelling

expenses, a base of operation, creating magic tools and also food there would simply be no end to it. This was why there was no such thing as an excessive amount of money. Suimei currently didn't have any, so after weighing in whether he should accept or not, he ended up accepting after all. Also even if they did plan to bind him down, it didn't mean Suimei had to respond in kind, it was completely dependent on his conscience. No matter what happened, no matter what they requested, all Suimei had to do was ignore it. Though that did depend on whether he could actually just do that...

Suimei turned his attention to the letter which was delivered with the money. Written on the fine paper were words expressing the King's wish for Suimei to accept his gift and an apology. Suimei's heart shook slightly as he read this, and let out a sigh. He suddenly felt that he had to show his gratitude to the King. After having gone some distance from the gate, he turned around and bowed down formally.

“You damn sly old fox.”

As expected, Suimei did not forget his vulgar language.

Epilogue II

The Court Mage, now former Court Mage Felmenia Stingray was in the archives working through a huge number of documents. It was a few days after Suimei's departure. On this day she was once more preparing and organizing the documents for her transfer. She was putting off the fruits of her magic research temporarily just for this. Naturally, this was all so that she could chase after Suimei who had departed to find a spell to return to his own world. She wanted to be even a little helpful to him and follow after him, though she was also doing this for her own feelings...

“Suimei-dono. Wait for me. Once I've finished with these documents to transfer, this Felmenia will race to your side as fast as possible. “

Suimei was not actually there. Right now he would probably be in Metel near the castle taking some sort of action to push towards his goals. As she recalled Suimei's figure, Felmenia spoke the feelings she held in her heart out loud. She truly wanted to be of use to Suimei. It was also true that she had strong feelings for him.

It started from the incident in the hallway and ended with him saving her during the case of Sebastian's capture. For a short while he was her enemy, he had defeated her completely, however one could say that this was a necessary step to the path they had gone down. Felmenia did not expect at all that this would all turn into her harbouring such feelings. To fall in love was to give birth to feelings of wanting to honestly spend time with another. For a Court Mage this sort of thing seemed like it was part of an entirely different world. Felmenia had given up on love as it seemed to have no relation to her life at all. But...

“Aah, Suimei-dono...”

Felmenia had suddenly been reminded of Suimei while working and took in a languishing breath. She recalled the time before he had left the castle just a few days ago. That day the ill feelings between them had been completely cleared up. They had talked quite a bit. He was a bit cruel, but also kind and they talked about all kinds of things. It was only for a short while but he also talked to her about the foundations of magic from the other world. Felmenia had a small problem with his slightly thickheaded attitude and his confused expression, but that was only a trivial complaint. As Felmenia stretched out her limbs while sitting on her stool, her eyes caught the spine of a book.

“Hm?”

The title of the book had caught her interest and she stood up and walked to the bookshelf to grab it.

“An Inquiry with Regards to the Hero Summoning Ritual and a History of the Summoned Heroes...”

These words greeted her when she opened the book, the contents and the title seemed to have nothing to do with each other.

“This is...”

Felmenia was surprised at the complete coincidence that she had grasped by chance. The words wrote about the hero summoning. It was probable that this would be of use to Suimei. She was sure that she should bring it with her when she went to chase after Suimei.

“But, if this gets Suimei-dono closer to his goal...”

A thought crossed Felmenia's mind that had been worrying her for a while. If she were to bring this to him, he would become one step closer to his goal and find a way to return to his world just that much faster. In that case he would find the spell to return the time that she would never be able to see him again would come... As a result, just where would the feelings she was currently embracing go?

“... Tch. No, don't think about it Felmenia! Suimei-dono's goal is the first priority! I'll just think about this afterwards!”

Felmenia knew she was choosing to just not think about it at all. Even so, she could only live out her life her way. She could not betray her proud and honourable way of life.